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Fall 2007

# GRIP

## The power of **balance**

### **Life of a clown**

Manage  
your daily  
juggling act

### **6-week exam guide**

Avoid last minute  
panic with a  
sure-fire plan

### **Plus!**

Movies made me  
smoke, Fit for life,  
Trampolinist Tugwell  
and cool quizzes

**Kiros:** A Calgary band chats about the best days of their lives



# Get props from your peeps!

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- Best non-fiction article (500 words)
- Best short story or poetry (500 words or up to five poems)
- Best photography or illustration
- Best podcast (under five minutes)

It's time to share your creativity – send your best entries to [gripx-press@venturepublishing.ca](mailto:gripx-press@venturepublishing.ca), including the category you are entering in the subject line, or mail them to: **Grip X-Press Awards, 10259 105 Street, Edmonton, AB T5J 1E3**

**Launched to celebrate Alberta teens' creativity, the awards will showcase new and emerging talent in written and visual arts.**

**Entries must be received by December 3, 2007, with the winners to be announced at a gala awards ceremony in January 2008.**

All entrants must be between 13 and 19 years of age on December 3, 2007 and resident in Canada. All entries must be original and must be entered in the name of the creator or creators. For full terms and conditions see [gripnlife.ca](http://gripnlife.ca)





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Pros and cons: Notes from a divided life

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BY TERILYN POTT





## A Message From the Youth Advisory Council

### **A**ll we really want in life is balance, right?

Well, this month's issue of *Grip* has answers to exactly what we are all looking for. We have advice from experts on how to keep your priorities straight and work hard without taking it all so seriously that you end up messed up. In this issue, there are tips on adding fitness to your busy day and how to manage that non-renewable resource called time.

The transition from summer vacation to school really hit me hard. I went from chilling out, staying up late, and sleeping in, to physics homework, an English essay due Monday and a nagging boss waiting for me at work. By the time I'd finished my shift at the diner, practiced with the volleyball team, visited with grandma and got the gossip of the week from my friends... it was time to get to bed. It suddenly seemed like I had no time to sleep or even breathe! How did I go from a stress level of 0 to off the scale?

These days, many of us are moving at a jet's pace and often don't realize how fast we're cruising until we hit the wall. It's tough to fit in a full semester of courses, sports team try-outs, having fun on the weekend, while trying to make a little coin and spend time with your family and friends. Even though reading one more thing may be the last thing on your mind, taking a few minutes to read this issue of *Grip* can definitely be to your advantage. It's tough sometimes to keep it all in line but if we don't take care of ourselves, who else really can, right?

Thanks for taking a minute of your precious time to crack open the magazine, and thanks to all our contributors, who worked hard on very short deadlines right when school was starting, for penning some great stories and articles. Feel free to send us your submissions anytime of the year. We're always looking for art, fiction, non-fiction, reviews – if you take the time to write it, we'll take the time to look at it.

*Fredrique (Freddie) Macdougall*  
**Grip** Youth Advisory Council

## A Message from the Alberta Mental Health Board

### **T**he faster we go, the more difficult it is to keep up.

Never has this been more true than today. The days aren't any longer than they were 10, 20 or 50 years ago, yet we are trying to cram more stuff into the same amount of time. We praise those who seem able to multitask and it's a badge of honour to be able to do homework, watch TV, talk on the phone and send a text message all at the same time.

Today's youth are taking on more activities and responsibilities than ever before – sports, work, school, friends, family, chores, hobbies. With all of these competing demands on your time, it can feel overwhelming. The trick is to find the balance between what you must do and what you want to do. Sometimes it means making tough choices.

This issue of *Grip* is about finding your balance... and this does not mean ignoring your schoolwork so you can see more of your friends. We all have things we have to do (and by the way, that doesn't change as you get older), but if you want to have a happy, healthy life, you also need to find time for the things that you enjoy. This is an important part of managing your stress when things seem too hard to handle.

Easier said than done, right? The articles in this issue can start you on your way to balancing your life. Invest some time to read about what other youth are doing to juggle their activities and make the most of their time. Developing good habits now will help you for many years into the future.

And don't forget, if you're lacking for extra curricular activities, we are looking for members to join *Grip*'s Youth Advisory Council. If you're between 13 and 18 and you want to help guide us in deciding the magazine's content, covers, judge the art and format of these very glossy pages, go to [www.griponlife.ca](http://www.griponlife.ca) and contact us.

*Ray Block*  
President and CEO  
Alberta Mental Health Board

**We're looking for applications from teens to be members of our youth advisory council for future issues of our magazine. Visit [griponlife.ca](http://griponlife.ca) for details.**



# ***grip***

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**Shelley Astill**, 15, lives in Whitecourt, AB, (in the middle of nowhere, she claims) and is in Grade 10. She loves to dance, everything from ballet to hiphop and everything in between. In her spare time, she teaches ballet. If she were a sport she'd be dance because it's the only sporty activity where you can have an attitude. If she were a fruit she'd be a cantaloupe because they are just so good.

At 5' 2", **Vivian Lee** may be considered short by some, but Napoleon, who conquered most of Europe, was the same height. So there. If she were a fruit, she'd be a tomato (pronounced toe-mAH-toe) even though mangoes have more fun.



Calgary resident **Allison McPhail**, 18, aspires to be an astronaut (the first person on Mars?). She loves comic books, physical activity, animals, science, and music. Her dislikes are rap, hip-hop, R&B and wearing skirts. If she were a TV show she would be **Kyle XY** because she says she can be very overly sensitive/dramatic, but is also big on science and mental challenges.



# Purge the Urge to Binge

How to recognize the signs and know when to get help

By Caitlin Hart

**W**herever you go, there are commercials, billboards and magazine articles telling you you're not good enough. You have to be thinner, taller, prettier, wear certain clothes or style your hair in a specific way. Today's teen feels pressured to be perfect; no wonder hospitalizations for eating disorders have increased by 34 per cent among young women under the age of 15, and by 29 per cent among 15- to 24-year-olds. Simply put, having an eating disorder means you're either eating too much, or too little, or worrying too much about your body size and shape. If you, or someone you know, is suffering from an eating disorder, get help. Speak to a family member, teacher or health professional. Don't be afraid to speak up. Do these look like you?

Anorexia nervosa is a potentially deadly disease in which a person develops a warped image of their body. Sufferers are more commonly teenage girls. Many feel a lack of control in their lives, and see eating as their only outlet.

Others are unsatisfied with their bodies, and believe that losing weight will make them happier. Some signs of anorexia-nervosa include moodiness, lack of enthusiasm in school and extra-curricular activities, refusing to eat around others, and lying about having eaten. Down the road you can become very, very sick and even die.

The physical effects of starvation are: a lowered heart rate and body temperature; a slower metabolism; irregular or absent menstruation; the growth of fine body hair on the face and back; hair loss on your head; dry, pasty skin; fatigue; swelling and puffiness in fingers, ankles, and face and ultimately, death.

Bulimia nervosa sufferers will binge (a period of uncontrolled or excessive eating) and then

"purge," or vomit it all back up right away. Although there are many different signs of bulimia to watch for, the most common include going to the washroom quickly after eating, moodiness, loss of interest in physical activities and a visible loss of enamel on their teeth. In the long run, people with bulimia can ruin the linings of their throat and stomach.

The physical effects of bingeing and purging are varied. They include: fatigue, muscle weakness, muscle spasms, irritability and depression; bloating, belly pain, constipation and cramping; swelling in the hands and feet, loss of enamel and dentin; tooth cavities; sleeplessness and death. ■

## Get help or information here The Alberta Mental Health Board

[www.amhb.ab.ca](http://www.amhb.ab.ca)

## The Eating Disorder Education Organization

[www.edeo.org](http://www.edeo.org)

Toll-free (Alberta only):

1-888-404-EDEO (3336)

## Quannah Mercredi Society for Eating Disorders

Ponoka, AB (403) 783-8377

## Capital Health's Eating Disorders Clinic, University of Alberta Hospital (780) 407-6575

## National Eating Disorder Information Centre

[www.nedic.ca](http://www.nedic.ca)

**Avoid sites that encourage  
or applaud eating disorders**





# Books and Their Covers

From dust jacket to denim jackets, people are more like books than you think

By Magdalena Rankin



**I**t's true what they say – don't judge a book by its cover. But it doesn't just apply to how big your nose is and how straight your teeth are. I hate it when someone takes one look at you and sees how you design your cover – with clothes and makeup and hair – and think they know everything there is to know about you.

The truth is they've got no idea. You need to open the book, flip through the pages and read it cover to cover. You need to not just look at the pages but really see them, really read them before you can pretend you know the story.

Some people will take the time to read your book, but when they're done, they point out the flaws and try to edit it. You alone have the right to change your

book. And sometimes if you want to change your genre, you can. But that's up to you. And if you think that those editors have a point then you can choose to take their suggestions.

They can make you obey the law and go to school and clean your room but they can't dictate who you are. They can tell you which plot twists there are but they can't tell you which one to take and use.

There are geeks and there are jocks, goths and valley-girls, but those are just genres and sections of the library, not the whole story. We all have our own book, and all our plots are thick and complex.

My cover is black with chains and spikes and skulls. My writing is poetic and when someone tries to edit me I slam shut on their fingers. That's how I choose to write my book.

How do you write yours? 

## Secondhand Smokers

**A** smarty pants journal called *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine* claims that characters smoking in movies might just encourage occasional teen smokers to ramp it up to true addiction status. **What, they think we're monkeys?**

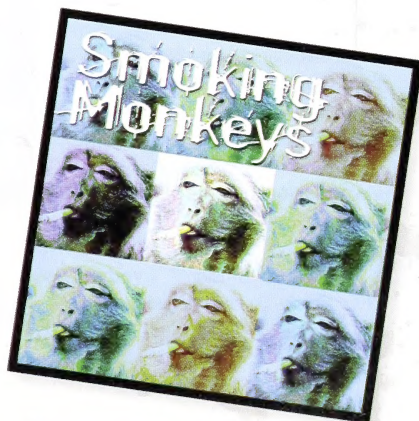
Researchers delivered questionnaires to more than 6,000 American kids between 10 and 14. They asked about their smoking and movie choices from as far back as 2003.

The University of Dartmouth dudes ranked and recorded the displays of smoking in more than 500 popular films in the years leading up to the survey. They presented the teens with a random selection of 50 of the movies and asked if they'd seen them. Then they devised a diabolically complex formula to measure the number of smoking instances.


The lab coats then followed the students over two years. **Here's what they found:**

- Nine out of 10 kids had not smoked at the beginning of the study
- Thirty-three of them had smoked more than 100 cigarettes
- Two years later, 125 of the teens were considered smokers
- Kids who watched 50 per cent fewer smoking episodes in movies were less likely than those who watched more puffing in the films to say they'd smoked more than 100 cigarettes.

Yeah, whatever, but here's the eyebrow raiser: The pocket protectors said that age, pals smoking, parental units lighting up and even other risk-loving activities didn't indicate the decision to smoke with the



same accuracy as the kids' earlier viewing of dudes and chicks in flicks lighting up.

The researchers made no claims, but guessed that positive associations acted to encourage smoking in teens. **Do you think we're monkeys?** Go to [griponlife.ca](http://griponlife.ca) and talk about it. 



## Quiz: Which Reality Show Are you?

So you're smarter than a millionaire. You'd vote a pal off the island. And you'd win the bachelorette's heart for sure. Take this quiz to find out whether you're best suited for *Big Brother* or the *Biggest Loser*.

**Note:** This quiz is for entertainment purposes only. It's not a diagnostic tool, so get off the island!

By Shelley Astill

### 1. It's early Monday morning, and you are sitting in math class. What are you doing?

- A) Tapping your foot and humming
- B) Staring at the gorgeous guy/girl in front of you
- C) Fidgeting!
- D) Listening; advanced calculus is fascinating

### 2. Where can you be found after school lets out?

- A) Duh! At a sports practice!
- B) Hanging out with tons of friends on the school steps
- C) As far away as possible
- D) Still at school finishing that extra project for next semester

### 3. What do you do in your spare time?

- A) Yoga and Pilates
- B) Watch chick flick movies, Kleenex box in hand
- C) Out exploring
- D) Work part time at the library

### 4. What is your favorite place to eat?

- A) Extreme Veggie Bistro
- B) Bill's Beef Bonanza
- C) Felix's Philippino Fusion
- D) There's nothing like a home-cooked meal

### 5. Your ideal after-school job is:

- A) Lifeguard, gym trainer, or jazz dance teacher
- B) Work? Who works?
- C) At a national park, preferably a bear sanctuary
- D) Secretary or assistant researcher to an academic

### MOSTLY As – SO YOU THINK YOU CAN DANCE

*You are an active person, some would say obsessed. You like nothing more than working up a sweat. If your heart rate is at rest, it means you're either dead or sleeping. It takes nothing less than complete physical exhaustion to get you to sit down and stop moving.*

### MOSTLY Bs: THE BACHELOR/BACHELORETTE

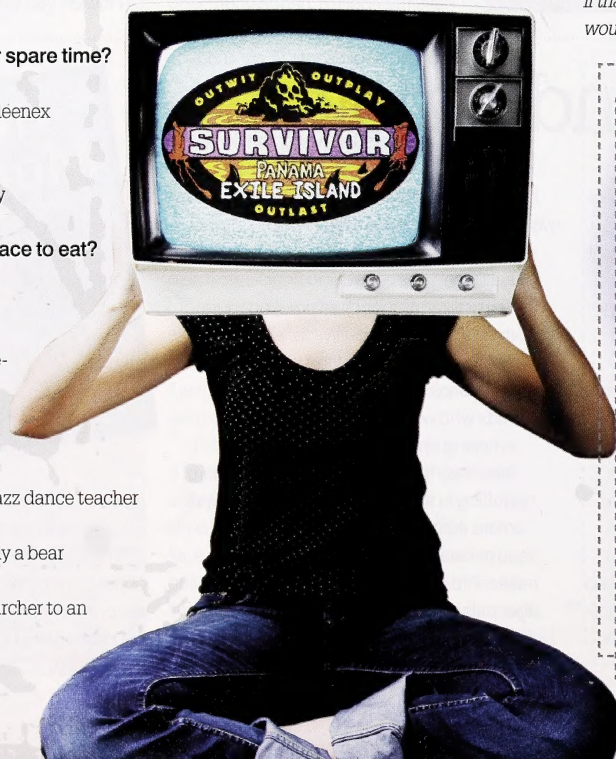
*You're a hopeless romantic with a hole in your soul when you are single. You get your kicks from being the most attractive person in the room. You want everyone to think you're the warmest, the most vulnerable, and the most in need of saving.*

### MOSTLY Cs: SURVIVOR ISLAND

*You're an outdoorsy, rugged individual with a high spirit and a full heart. Nature is your companion, but also your competitor. You like nothing better than to rough it, making a bowl out of bark and fire out of thin air. You're willing to smell other people's sweat and forge alliances with the strong to make it to the top of the food chain.*

### MOSTLY Ds: WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE!

*You've got a head on your shoulders and aren't afraid to use it. You are competitive, in a geeky sort of way, and love to put your brain to the test. You've known for a long time you wanted to be famous, and you'll swallow whole dictionaries if that's what it takes. Winning a cool million wouldn't hurt. ☞*





# Hats Off

Hats. You see them every few seconds of your young life. You got to wonder about them. Hell, you may even wear one from time to time. Whether it be to keep warm, get some shade or maybe just add some style to your outfit, you want to pick the right hat. Here's the 411 on headgear:

By Curtis Wendlandt

## The Trucker

Somewhere along the road someone decided that it's fashionable to dress like a truck driver. Now it's sold everywhere and seen everywhere. Who would have thought something named after the profession of truck driving would have become so popular.



## The Teamster

Yes, the infamous team sports hats are not only alive, they're seen often. While not quite as popular as they used to be, the Classic NHL and CFL hats are still seen on jocks and countless fans. However, these hats are more of an ordeal than a fashion statement.



## The Bandana (a.k.a Headband)

The bandana is the legend that refuses to die. It reigned among the eras of Hendrix, Zeppelin and Floyd. Huge in the late 1960s, 70s and 80s, it was nearly silenced until a few years ago. No longer just a fashion accessory, wearing the bandana will either make you a god or an outcast.



## The Beanie

The beanie is the hat that redefined the term "toque." It looks a bit like a hacky sack. But the beanie is the one toque that you'll see all year around.



## The Hipster

These are the hats that commonly read "NYC" and are worn with the sticker still plastered onto the hat. This hat is now a legacy among the hip hop world. Turn on MTV or MuchMusic and you'll see this one at least every couple songs. But I still don't understand why people leave the price sticker on the hat.

# Get Props from your Peeps

**Grip** magazine is pleased to announce its first annual **Grip X-Press Awards** program. Independent judges will award prizes in the following categories:

- Best non-fiction article (500 words)
- Best short story or poetry (500 words or up to five poems)
- Best photography or illustration
- Best podcast (under five minutes)

We'll invite short listed entrants to a cool awards

ceremony in January. We'll announce the winners at the party and publish their work in the spring 2008 issue of **Grip** magazine. So, boot up. Send your entries to:

[grip-x-press@venturepublishing.ca](mailto:grip-x-press@venturepublishing.ca).

Include the category of your entry in the subject line. We'll consider all entries received by midnight on December 3, 2007.

We can already hear the happy tippety-tap of computer keys.

## The Cowboy

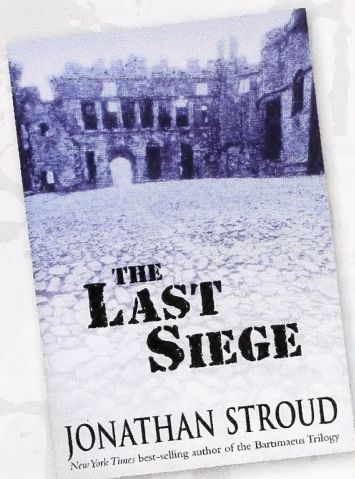
A sensation among the westerners and country fans. Somehow, the wonders of the cowboy hat are to this day not dead. Although I wouldn't be caught dead wearing one, there are many people who would, and you got to give them some credit. It takes guts to wear the Cowboy. ☐





# Rainy Weekend Books

Here's the word on some new words from writers who want your attention (and your paycheque)



**The Last Siege** by Jonathan Stroud

REVIEWED BY LISA OSTROWSKI

Jonathan Stroud, the British author best known for the Bartimaeus Trilogy returns with another exciting adventure novel. *The Last Siege* takes place in an abandoned castle in the English countryside during the middle of winter. Banded together as a result of their roles as outsiders, Simon, Marcus and Emily play at first, though they are quick to attempt to break into the castle's interior, which is closed to the public during the winter months.

The trio manages narrowly to escape the guard who tries to prevent their entrance to the castle, but as time goes on a far more dangerous threat appears. The journey that these three seemingly dissimilar characters endure through the novel is not only exciting, but highly imaginative and entertaining as well.

**Grade: B+** *Stroud's vivid descriptions and the castle map at the beginning of the book help to create an even better image of the story, and make it easier to understand.*

**Ranger's Apprentice, Book One:**

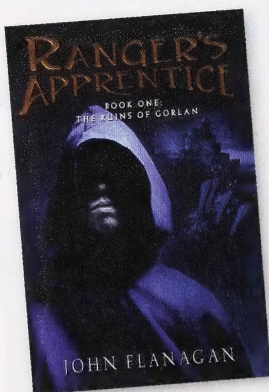
**The Ruins of Gorlan** by John Flanagan

REVIEWED BY PAIGE PARSONS

The first installment in John Flanagan's fantasy series, *Ranger's Apprentice*, is a coming-of-age tale set in a mythical land of knights and castles. Fifteen-year-old Will is apprehensive about the upcoming Choosing Day, when his future career will be decided for him.

An orphan left on the castle steps with a mysterious note that hints at the identity of his deceased father, Will is uncertain about which path his life will follow. When he's selected to be an apprentice to the shadowy ranger named Halt, Will begins to discover secrets about his kingdom and himself. As ranger training progresses he also learns more about his master, Halt, who may know more about Will's parentage than he's letting on.

An imaginative and engaging plot, sup-



plemented by colourful characters, this book will keep you riveted if you enjoy fantasy fiction. However, if you have little patience for magic and far-fetched heroics, it's not for you.

**Grade: B+** *This novel will appeal to fans of the Harry Potter or Eragon series.*



**Alice, I Think** by Susan Juby

REVIEWED BY MEGAN RYLAND

Alice is 15 and full of angst, which means that she's not that different from most other teenage girls; she just happens to be far more entertaining. Living in small-town British Columbia, where the hippy population is still out of control, she struggles to set and complete her Life Goals, as instructed by her therapist, Death Lord Bob.

After a traumatic first grade experience, Alice has been home schooled for most of her life, but it seems that it's time to head back out into the world. How else is she going to complete Life Goal #2: "Increase contact with people outside immediate family"? Never mind that, what about Life Goal #4: "Some sort of boy-girl interaction"? Then, there are the all important style issues. If she's going back to public school, she needs the perfect haircut and new clothes. Unfortunately, good hair can't keep away the kids who want to kill you, and that's when mothers come in handy. Alice is on a quest to cross off Life Goals and nothing is going to stand in her way...she thinks.

**Grade: B** *Alice has a lot on her plate and deals with it in her own quirky way, which keeps us laughing at her antics. This diary-style novel will make your life look normal. Characters use words such as "like" and "OMG" seriously. It's hard not to fall in love with their infectious personalities!*



# Must-See Movies

Make a beeline for the best bets and beware of the bombs

## **Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix**

REVIEWED BY SAMANTHA MARCELLIN

It's the fifth year at Hogwarts, and Harry's school year starts out with accusations from his peers that he and Dumbledore have lied about You-Know-Who's return. Only his best friends believe him, and to make matters worse, a new nemesis at the school forces Harry (Daniel Radcliffe) to take matters into his own hands – again.

This film is pivotal for the characters' development because it brings out their best qualities – the true loyalty and sacrifice that is present in each of them. Backed by a faithful group of young wizards and bolstered by a budding romance, Harry learns surprising things about his friends.

This installment doesn't fall short. With many surprise twists and suspenseful scenes, it turns out to be one of the most memorable of the *Potter* movies. *The Order of the Phoenix* doesn't disappoint and keeps you on the edge of your seat.  
**Grade: A** Even if you are not a big Harry Potter fan, you'll love this movie.



## **Hairspray**

REVIEWED BY ALYSSA KNOOP

This movie will get you saying, "Man, I wish the kids at my school would spontaneously break into song and dance like that." It's based on the John Waters film, and set in 1962. The main character, Tracy Turnblad, (Nikki Blonsky) is a big girl with even bigger hair with one passion in life: dancing. In a series of comic twists and turns, she goes from high school zero to hero, and even wins the roving eye of the young man of her dreams.

It's upbeat, the songs are great, and so is the cast! As Tracy's mother, Edna, actor John Travolta had me laughing so hard my stomach hurt. He does an amazing job under all that makeup.

**Grade: A+** Director Adam Shankman chose the right cast; they worked so well together. *Hairspray* is a must-see!

## **Superbad**

REVIEWED BY SCAACHI KOUL

Who would think "McLovin" would become one of the most recognizable terms this summer? *Superbad* follows the travails of two co-dependant teens, Evan (Michael Cera) and Seth (Jonah Hill), who plan one last booze-soaked party before they graduate from high school. They decide that in order to have one night together with the girls they've admired for the past year, inebriation is an absolute must.

Together with their self-unaware loser classmate, Fogell, (Christopher Mintz-Plasse) and his fake ID adorned with the name McLovin, their plan to have one final moment of teenaged carelessness unravels as the night progresses. While Cera's uncomfortable gawkiness is perfectly paired with Hill's manic performance, it's hard to sympathize with his character. Seth becomes so brash and irritating that the movie begins to sag in the middle.

**Grade: B** Michael Cera's inexplicably hilarious performance makes up for *Superbad*'s faults.





## Ear Candy

Have a listen to some new releases and read the *Grip* ratings to find out if they should appear on your iPod



**Cex Cells** by Blaqk Audio,  
Interscope Records

REVIEWED BY MATTHEW OSIPOVAS

*Cex Cells* is characterized by powerful vocals combined with amazing synthesized beat loops. Born as a side project of two AFI members, Davey Havok and Jade Puget, this album shows a never-seen-before side of the two members. Blaqk Audio's debut album will cater to anyone who has delved into the electronica/electro-rock genres.

Blaqk Audio presents a fresh and modern flare to electronica. The work is by the well known and loved vocals of Havok, and Puget's work with the keyboard and synthesizer. Songs

such as "Snuff in Digital" and "Wake Up, Open The Door And Escape To The Sea" will be oddly reminiscent of songs from Depeche Mode solely on the electronic aspects of the songs. More upbeat songs such as "Semiotic Love" and "Again, Again And Again" will give you that strange sense that you're listening to U.K. rave music.

**Grade: A** *Overall an interesting album with its melancholy songs alongside several upbeat ones. Potent vocals couple with a healthy dosage of synthesized beats. Cex Cells would be an interesting addition to any electronica fan's music collection.*

**The Con** by Tegan and Sara,  
Sire Records

REVIEWED BY MATTHEW OSIPOVAS

Tegan and Sara's ever changing sound is featured in this newest album, *The Con*. This album features their evidently maturing voice, along with songs that are no longer based on high-pitched repetitive vocals and ordinary drumming. Following on the heels of their previous success, *The Con* brings a definitely new sound to Tegan and

Sara's already impressive repertoire.

"Are You Ten Years Ago" features interesting drum loops and fast paced, catchy vocals. An excellent example of the maturity and creativity in vocals is found in "Relief Next to Me" as well as "Call It Off".

**Grade: A** *The Con brings forward the new and growing sound of Tegan and Sara to the center stage. Brim full of interesting vocals and excellently synthesized songs this is a definite pick up for fans of this duo.*



**Silent Shout** by The Knife,  
Mute U.S.

REVIEWED BY JOE VISZMEG

Swedish brother and sister Olof Dreijer and Karin Dreijer Andersson are The Knife. *Silent Shout*, their third release, came out in mid-2006. It's best described as catchy, soft core techno.

It's oddly calming, despite the rushing techno pace, and it doesn't have that irritating

edge of some techno releases. It's detailed and emotional and it's a great entry point to techno sounds. The processed and filtered vocals leave the voices adding depth to the instrumentation.

The Knife's simple but original melodies and vocals get better with every listen. It's all positive!

**Grade: A** *It's kind of a more electronic pop that can really get stuck in your head.*



# Graphic Tales

Read about the winners and the also-rans in the latest pen-and-ink books



## **Garage band** by Gipi

REVIEWED BY JOE VISMZEG

Find four boys, and you get a band. Throw a garage in the mix and you get garage band, a bunch of boys who are willing to do anything to make a successful music group and become stars. But when they find themselves behind on few instruments and supplies, they just might do anything.

*Garage Band* is a wonderfully illustrated graphic novel that keeps your eye fixed on the paper from beginning to end. Gipi uses a rough, yet elegant pen and watercolors that suit the story perfectly. The story portrays the awkward times of a teen in a brief 119 pages.

**Grade: A+** *There's a whole series to follow up on, so get reading!*

## **The Black Diamond Detective Agency**

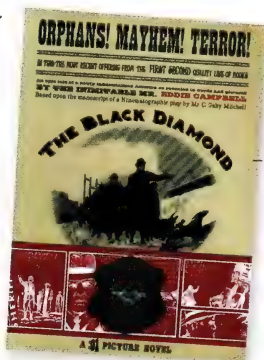
by Eddie Campbell

REVIEWED BY KENDRA DOETZEL

At the turn of the 19th century, a train bound for Lebanon, Missouri explodes in the town and kills protesters waiting there.

The search for the culprit is on. Through the rubble, one name is found: John Hardin. A farmer, Hardin claims innocence, and flees to Chicago. The search is on, and it leads to many twisted directions, including run ins with gangs and old, bitter friendships. Hardin follows new leads while trying to escape capture.

**Grade: B-** *Although it's an interesting storyline, it is a little hard to follow.*

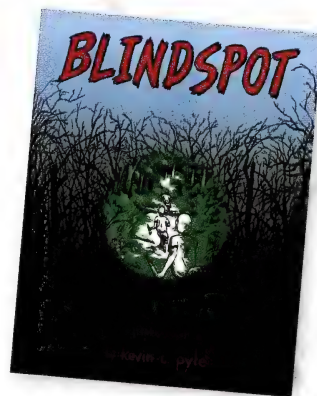


## **Plain Janes** by Cecil Castellucci; art by Jim Rugg

REVIEWED BY KENDRA DOETZEL

After a tragic incident which leaves everyone terrified, Jane is forced to leave everything she knows and loves in Metro City to move to her parents' idea of safety in suburbia. With her new, fresh artsy look, and a "John Doe" left back in the city, Jane wonders if she'll be able to find comfort in three other girls, also named Jane, at her new school and settle in comfortably. Jane forms a secret, art-loving gang with the other Janes to rebel against suburban ugliness. They sign their protests "P.L.A.I.N." or People Loving Art In Neighborhoods.

**Grade: A-** *The plot keeps you entertained from beginning to end, although it makes you feel like you're missing something at the end.*



## **Blindspot** By Kevin C. Pyle

REVIEWED BY JOE VISMZEG

Remember when you were new in the neighbourhood or school? There was always some form of test to get into some sort of group or clique. It's almost the exact story of Dean, the new boy on the block, willing to do anything to fit in with the crowd he thinks looks like home. Pretending to be soldiers, the other boys take Dean through a series of tasks for his rite of passage.

The idea for the story may be good, but the art of the novel is dull and simple, the colours rarely change and barely catch your eye. And when a writer of a graphic novel uses drawings as their descriptions, they should keep their story descriptive so you understand who each of the characters are. I found that I got confused between the characters almost all the time in the story.

**Grade: C-** *The lack of colours and artistry pull Blindspot behind the rest, making the story barely average.*



# Just Play Along

It doesn't matter if you win or lose – it's how badly you lose that matters

REVIEWED BY GRAYSON EVANS



**Game:** Red Steel by Ubisoft  
**System:** Nintendo Wii  
**Rating:** Teen (T)

This game is the first FPS (first-person-shooter) on the Nintendo Wii. The gameplay is unique: you move the remote to look around. But there are a few

problems. The game doesn't have a very good story and the gameplay gets repetitive. For example, in different levels the same avatars are used and pop up at the same place every time you retry the level and the AI (artificial intelligence) avatars aren't very smart; they will usually hide behind things that explode when shot.

**Hint:** You will need two or more numchuks to play multiplayer.

**Grade: C+** The multiplayer feature is fun with four people, but boring with only two.



**Game:** Wii Play by Nintendo  
**System:** Nintendo Wii  
**Rating:** E for everyone

This Wii game has more than four fun games that are great for parties. There are a variety of games from pool to racing cows! You have to unlock all the games except for one, which is the sharp shooter

game, but to unlock them all you have to do is play them.

Each game has unique controls; the only problem is that once you've played the game, it gets boring.

**Hint:** When playing Ping-Pong, don't move the controllers too fast or you won't be able to hit the ball.

**Grade: C** Overall, this is a great party game, but not one that keeps you entertained for long.

## Bulletin Board

"After all, it does not do to dwell on dreams and forget to live."  
 -Albus Dumbledore



Capitaine Kebec Rules!  
[www.collectionscanada.ca/superheroes](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/superheroes)



**\*Youth by Youth**  
 Alberta's own Hot Shots high school film fest is in hiatus this year – it's going national in '08!

In the meantime:  
[www.studentfilms.com](http://www.studentfilms.com).  
 And see [www.calgaryfilm.com](http://www.calgaryfilm.com) this September for entries in Calgary's Youth by Youth Cinema short film competition.



**Start a short story**  
 I am on a bus heading to Graceland, Tennessee. A gypsy king with long red hair is sitting next to me. Through the smoke from the cigar clenched in the driver's teeth I see a French sailor...





## New School Year's Resolutions

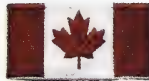
- \* Learn how to:
  - do homework, keep a job AND have a life
  - yodel
  - speak better French
  - learn how [www.wikihow.com](http://www.wikihow.com)
- \* Eat something new every week
- \* Start a daily diary and actually write in it
- \* Think up my very own daily affirmation
- \* Quit that bad habit

Beauty gets a face lift  
[www.campaignforrealbeauty.com](http://www.campaignforrealbeauty.com)

Test Your Canadian Trivia, eh?  
[www.cbc.ca/greatest/interactives/trivia](http://www.cbc.ca/greatest/interactives/trivia)

Join the Nature Challenge  
[www.davidsuzuki.org/NatureChallenge](http://www.davidsuzuki.org/NatureChallenge)

Get a...  
[www.griponlife.ca](http://www.griponlife.ca)



Your ability to judge new tasks  
 is not the same as your  
 ability to judge old ones.  
 Lady Marmalade 14, Feb 2004, 14:45



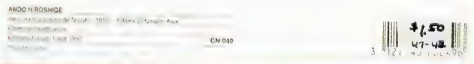
Signs of **anxiety** include 2-4 weeks of:

- 1) feeling worried/on edge
- 2) being bothered by repetitive thoughts
- 3) avoiding places/things because of anxiousness
- 4) shortness of breath, racing heart, dizziness
- 5) spending time doing things over & over
- 6) trouble concentrating
- 7) trouble sleeping/bad dreams

See Publications & Resources [www.amhb.ab.ca](http://www.amhb.ab.ca)

"You must not lose faith in humanity.  
 Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops  
 of the ocean are dirty, the ocean  
 does not become dirty."

-Mohandas Karamchand  
 "Mahatma" Gandhi



Dude, I'm an  
 artiste: [www.zefrank.com/scribbler](http://www.zefrank.com/scribbler)



Do so! Do not!  
 Check out the Sir Winston Churchill  
 Society Debate tournament, in both  
 Calgary and Edmonton.  
[www.compumart.ab.ca/adebate](http://www.compumart.ab.ca/adebate)



## Read 'em:

- \* **Some of the Kinder Planets**  
 by Tim Wynne-Jones
- \* **The Black Stallion**  
 by Walter Farley
- \* **Nobody's Son**  
 by Sean Stewart
- \* **A Wrinkle in Time**  
 by Madeline L'Engle

What's my Simpsons  
 character?

[simpsonizeme.com](http://simpsonizeme.com)



## \*Classic DVDs 4 rent

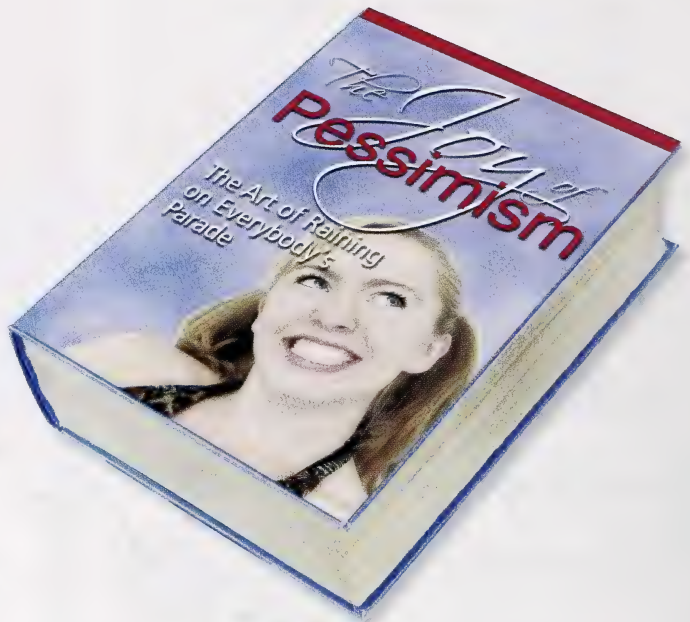
- 1) The Seven Up series,  
 directed by Michael Apted
- 2) 12 Angry Men,  
 directed by Sidney Lumet
- 3) Spaceballs,  
 directed by Mel Brooks
- 4) The Princess Bride,  
 directed by Rob Reiner



# The Joy of Negativity

A humorous look at how pessimism can actually make the world a better place

By Scaachi Koul



**W**hat is a pessimist? A pessimist is a person who sees flowers and looks around for the funeral.

A pessimist is someone who eats a sundae with the expectation of lactose intolerance.

A pessimist is someone who sits on a porch swing on a hot summer's eve, sipping lemonade while waiting for a honey bee to sting them, a tree to fall on their house, or for the gentle night breeze to knock over a lavender scented candle, erupting a fire as they choke on the iced drink, get attacked by wild insects, and have the flames lick at their sweating body.

I, fair reader, am a pessimist, and a lofty one at that. I relish pessimism's cousin, cynicism. I flourish in the face of despair and regret is turning out to be my most loyal companion. I wake up to Lewis Black, I go out to dinner with Jon Stewart, and Oscar Wilde hums me to sleep. Granted, my life is dull; however, it's surprisingly fulfilling, if draconian. Still, my disdainful manner gives way to questions. While I have the personality and overall joy of chipped ice, my friends and family are sunnier, proving that opposites really do attract.

Active disdain is certainly not for everyone;

one needs consistency to maintain my level of pessimism. While I can do so without breaking a sweat, those around me often wonder how it remains possible for me to continue living life while I give off the aura of Machiavellian depth.

The key: the balance of opposing forces.

My cheery friends are a counterpoint to my darker nature. And, within myself, I have found the fine balance between a disdain for deserving targets, and a noxious enthusiasm for everything from cauliflower to canker sores. But, if pressed, I'd have to admit that life is not as horrible as I say. But, hey – it's not as wonderful as any of my friends say, either.

Granted, there was a time when I was far more optimistic than I am now, but I find that I enjoy life more through active disdain. The key is choosing the right targets for loathing. Find something worth detesting! There's global warming, racism, thoughtless cruelty, poverty, mindless pop music, coloured hair elastics – the list is endless.

While I am, by nature, easily irritated and wary of other people and their motives, I am far from limited by my nature. Half the fun of figuring out your personality is attempting to balance its

defects. I prefer to ignore them.

In reality, few are as pessimistic as they pretend. And frankly, my pessimism is more than cancelled out by my cheerful friends. When taken as counterpoint to them, I realize I ought to become even more negative.

So be pessimistic, I say. Be sick of positive energy! Ignore a cute puppy! Think of ways to lay blame at the door of your younger siblings without making it traceable to you! Refuse to shop at box stores! Write a scathing letter about your MP's inaction on whatever issue bugs you most! Enjoy the un-enjoyable, and forget the worries of your bubblier counterparts.

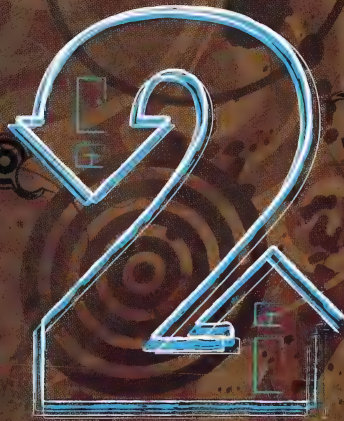
So, with that said, here are some of the more trivial things that I despise with unbridled passion: coloured hair elastics, men who wear their cell phones on their belts when they can very well place them in pockets, Beyoncé's giant hair, Ann Coulter's profound ego, public pools, anyone who calls New York "The Big Apple," The Oscars, The Grammys, The Golden Globes, 14-year-olds with Louis Vitton handbags, Mitch Albom's pseudo-enlightenment about death, and anyone named "Chip."

Come on, who names their kid Chip? ■



# Drowning, not waving!

Your **shift** at work lasts until 10 even though you told your **boss** that your math **final** is the next day. Your dad won't **lay off** about your last **report card** and if you **miss** one more **practice** your coach says you're off the **volleyball** team. And it's not like he **doesn't get** that it **conflicts** with your debate club. Your social **textbook** is gathering dust on your desk and you have about **50 e-mails** to catch up on in the commercials of **Lost**. You haven't walked the **dog** since sometime last year. There it is: **Be-boop!** Another **message** from your buddy wanting you to **meet** him at the **mall**. **The mall?** Where does he find the **time**?



## The King of Drama

Let the perfect hobby restore balance to your life PLUS: Grip's top 10; Quiz: Are you balanced? Juggling it all: A clown's life; The price of staying awake; A he said, she said debate; Work some time in for chillaxin' with our six week exam planner

18

## The Power of Balance

### Two Takes on Two Homes

You have two beds: one at your mom's, one at your dad's

20

### Way to Be, Emily Cooley

Find out where she finds the time to do it all and then some

22

### My Lack of Balance

When family jiggles the tightrope, just hang on

24





# A Liberating Hobby

By Jackson Tse

I got great marks at school, but I didn't have many friends. I wasn't even comfortable speaking in front of people. A new hobby restored the balance

**M**y mouth is dry, my hands are shaking and there's a knot in my stomach that won't go away. I've only just started the presentation in my Grade 7 social class, but already my nervousness causes me to feel like I'm going to vomit. *I hate public speaking.* I hate it. Angry tears form on my lashes. *I hate it.*

Five years ago, that Grade 7 kid was me. The thought of having people look at me, scrutinize me, and judge me – all while I was trying to not make a fool of myself – was utterly petrifying. I would've said that public speaking was undoubtedly my worst fear. And I wasn't alone. A survey conducted by the *Sunday Times* of London in the 1970s found that 41 per cent of respondents listed "fear of public speaking" as their number one fear. Only 19 per cent feared death above all.

It certainly is strange then, that today I actually enjoy voicing my opinions in front of others on the debate team and student council. The class presentations that were so mortally terrifying then don't seem terrifying now, and the task of giving speeches to an audience doesn't fright-

en me in the least. What changed for me in these last five years? How did I overcome my fear?

At the end of Grade 7, I knew that my life was out of balance. I had very few friends and I kept to myself at school. I generally avoided conversation and I was completely absorbed in my studies. But I soon realized: what good was being smart if you lacked friends to share in your success? I knew something had to change. I decided to step out of my comfort zone and try something new. I didn't know that it would spark a transformation in me.

I had to fight bravely against my introverted nature when I chose drama over art as an option in my Grade 8 year. The first time I stepped onto the school stage in front of my classmates I was terrified. I performed a carefully choreographed comedy routine. Once I got out there I was absorbed in the task and my fear subsided. At the end my teacher and classmates complimented me. Acting gave me a feeling of immense satisfaction, as if I had created something wonderful to be enjoyed by others.

Drama class became the highlight of my day.

My passion for acting and my unexpected success became the root of my newly gained self-esteem. As the year continued, I realized that if I imagined that my class presentations were drama performances, I wouldn't be as nervous and would probably do better. It worked. I shed the wallpaper personality that I had previously cultivated for myself and I made many new friends that year and the following years.

In order to achieve balance in a stressed-out life, you may need to find a liberating hobby like I did. Acting has repeatedly made me step out of my old habits and has enabled me to find a balance between my schoolwork and my friends. It has given me the confidence I needed to pursue my ideas and move forward.

Perhaps the secret of life is in finding balance, and the secret of finding balance is discovering the right hobby. Unfamiliar situations force you to step out of your comfort zone and experience things that you've never experienced before. Who knows? Your new skill may develop into your new hobby, and you may realize that it was the best thing that's ever happened to you. ■





# 10

## Ways to fit every single last little thing you want to do into one teeny-tiny week and still have time left for chillaxin'

By Lisa Ostrowski



Now that school's back, it's time to say goodbye to long summer days with plenty of free time. It's often hard to **balance** school, extra-curricular activities and other commitments while still **managing down time**. But there are ways to master the schedule without Hermione Granger's time turner to **squeeze more time** out of each day. Here are *Grip's* 10 tips to get you through the year:

### 1. Turn off the tube:

Instead of turning on the TV after school, try working on a project first. If there's a show you really can't miss, catch it on TiVO, or work before and after the show. Limiting tube time has never been shown to harm a growing brain.

### 2. Figure where the time goes:

Spend a week writing down how you spend time on tasks such as computer socializing, chores, your job and studying. Once you know how much time you spend on different activities, and how much time you have available at the end, scheduling becomes a lot easier. Identify where you're wasting time and you can fix your timetable to be more efficient.

### 3. Use an alarm clock:

Yes, sleeping in can be nice and it's important. But it cuts back on the amount of day in which you have to do stuff. If you want to sleep in, do it just on Saturday or Sunday, not both. Try waking up only a little bit later than normal, rather than hours later. The difference in what you can accomplish in one day will be impressive.

### 4. Start early:

There's nothing worse than rushing to get something done. Rather than devoting full evenings to last-minute projects, spend a little bit of each night working towards getting your assignments completed. You'll have lots of time left to count your Facebook friends. Starting chores early and working in advance can save you from missing out.

### 5. Use a day timer:

It sounds really obvious, but it is one of the most useful tools out there. Take note of when your major assignments, exams or events are. That way, it's easier to plan out when you'll have time to work on projects. Online or paper daytimers can also help you use your free time more effectively to do more fun stuff, rather than less.

### 6. Two words: To-do list:


This one goes hand in hand with the daytimer. Try writing a to-do list for yourself, since often that visual reminder can be a helpful push towards accomplishing goals and freeing up time. Make one for the week, and if you find it helpful, you can even try doing a daily to-do list. There's nothing more satisfying than crossing off the last task on a long list of chores or assignments.

**7. Don't overbook:** Make sure that you don't plan on doing more than you can in one day. If you already have plans with your family, don't try to make it to a friend's birthday party the same night. You'll have to reschedule with one of them, but try not to make a habit of changing plans with one party several times in a row.

**8. Prioritize:** At the beginning of each week, make a list of everything you want to get done. Figure out what's most important, and do that first. Start work on these projects at the beginning of the week. That way, if you get them done ahead of schedule you'll have free time for other stuff.

**9. Set reasonable limits:** One of the most important things behind successful scheduling is knowing what you can accomplish. Rather than setting lofty goals, set smaller goals for yourself, so you know you can reach them. Then, once you reach your goals it is easy to add on new ones.

### 10. Ask for help and be flexible:

Don't overwork yourself. If you're completely swamped, know that it's acceptable to ask for help, or to change your plans slightly. It is hard to plan out everything, and sometimes things may not go as you want. Be prepared for change. 



# Two Takes on Two Homes

You know they both love you, but it's not easy, shuttling back and forth between your mom's and dad's. Here are two teens' stories about coping with the situation

## Tightrope

By Samantha Marcellin

Dad and I walk to the car in silence. Summer holidays are almost over. Some of the leaves have already started to turn orange. All the moving back and forth between my parents' homes makes the summer go by so much faster.

As I slide into the car, I wonder why Dad never has much to say to me. I guess I shouldn't take it personally. My parents don't talk much. They haven't really had a conversation since I was about five, so I carry messages between them all the time. My mom's been working hard to get her life back together after years of depression. The communication between them is a little better now, but not much.

The car ride would be less awkward if Dad and I could just talk about something, anything, but I know it won't happen. Instead, I try to remember if I've brought enough stuff to last the five days I'll be at Mom's. This is easier during the school year because I only spend alternate weekends at my Mom's. When my parents got divorced in 1997, Mom was depressed, and

Dad was awarded full custody. This means I'm at his house just about all of the time. My mom and I are always working to get more time together.

When we drive up to Mom's place she's waiting outside with a big smile on her face. I look back at my dad, who is expressionless. "Call home once a day to let me know what you are doing," he says. That's great. It's more than likely I'll end up talking to his answering machine. And besides, I have two homes, not just his.

To be fair, a good thing about being at Dad's is that it's very stable and we have three cats and two dogs that are a lot of fun.

He drives away and Mom helps me with my bags. When I get into the house I am greeted by two elderly, yapping Pekingese dogs. I let out a long breath and adjust to the different atmosphere. I unpack my things in my turquoise room, but know that I'll have to pack up again soon and do it all over again.

### Sam's tips

- Strive for communication with both parents. It's important that you can talk to them individually. If this can't be accomplished, try to find someone in both branches of your family that you can talk to.
- Have a set of essential possessions at each house. Sometimes it's hard to bring everything back and forth.
- Don't be a messenger. Your parents shouldn't have to rely on you to communicate.
- Find ways to relieve stress that can be accomplished in either house. For example, take a bath, listen to music, take a walk or talk to someone.
- Don't get in the middle of your parents' arguments. This isn't something that should concern you, and it can wreck any balance you have.
- Be positive. Try not to dwell on the situation; know that it isn't forever.



## His, Hers, Mine

By Alyssa Knoop

I finish cramming my clothes into my backpack and flop onto my bed. I'm exhausted from cleaning my room – it feels like it took all day. But I feel a sense of tired triumph as I gaze around to admire my work. The orange reflecting off of my curtains gives the small room a warm feeling. All I have on my mind is sleep. I lie on my pillow (freshly fluffed) and almost doze off until my dad's voice echoes up the stairs.

"Time to go!" he says. No nap for me. My dad, my sister and I, and our bags, cram into the car and head to my mom's. On the way, my sister blabs about nothing to my dad, and I shut my eyes, struggling against the bumps of the car, grateful for the bed awaiting me at my other home. But when we arrive, I can tell from Mom's impatient face that there are chores to do here, too. My sister must realize the same thing. She whispers in my ear, "No sleep tonight."

There are a lot of stresses that come with having two homes. You have two rooms to clean, two sets of chores to do, but there's also more complicated stuff. If one parent has found someone else, you might feel upset that they don't have the same feelings for your other

parent anymore. Maybe you're nervous if their partner has kids. Sometimes a step-family makes you feel like you've been replaced, like you're not good enough. I got lucky because I love my step-family, and my step-siblings and I have an awesome relationship.

If one parent hasn't found somebody else, you feel pressure to take care of them and make sure that they're happy. Sometimes when your parents are mad at each other, they might talk to each other through you. When they fight, it feels like they want you to pick sides. You feel caught in the middle.

Psychologist Greg Schoepp, of Edmonton's Stollery Children's Hospital, sees a lot of kids who have two homes. "There's no specific age where having two homes is easier or harder to handle. It depends what situation you're in, and how you're coping," he says.

I've found that the easiest way to cope with stress is to talk about it. If you keep all your feelings bottled up inside, one day you'll explode. Not literally, of course. "You need to make sure that people know how you feel," Schoepp agrees. "Most times, the parents will be able to work things out for you." If it's too hard to talk to your parents directly, keep a diary, or you could talk with a friend whom you trust. You can talk to the school guidance counsellor or your family doctor.

Sometimes, I don't see a bright side to having two homes. Sure, it's cool to have two Christmases, two birthdays, but the highlight is knowing that both parents are happy. If my parents were still together, that wouldn't be the case.

But now, they've both found others to make them happy.

One thing to keep in mind is that you're not alone. Many teens have to learn to balance two homes. I think you should acknowledge that your parents are happy, and deal with those

stresses that come with it one day at a time.

Let your parents know if there's something bothering you about the set-up; they'll try to fix it.

In front of my mom's house, I wave as my dad drives away and then I turn to greet my mom. Sure, there'll be chores to do here, too, but she welcomes us with a smile. We walk through the door and my sister and I head upstairs to unpack.

We're home. Again. 

**I've found that the easiest way to cope with stress is to talk about it.**

### Speak up!

If you ever feel like there's no way out, or if you ever have thoughts about running away or hurting yourself, talk to someone. Here are some resources:

- [www.teenlineonline.org](http://www.teenlineonline.org)
- Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868 [www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)
- A.B.C. government-sponsored site has a section specifically for teens whose parents are splitting. Visit [www.familieschange.ca/teen](http://www.familieschange.ca/teen) for tips on achieving family balance.
- [www.youthone.com](http://www.youthone.com) (780) 482-HELP
- Calgary Distress Centre (403) 264-TEEN





# Way to be, Emily Cooley

This Calgary resident and lab technician pioneered a research project that left cancer biologists amazed

By Vivian Lee



**By the time she was 18, Emily Cooley had** helped science take another step forward in the fight against cancer. While in her last year of high school, she worked part time, volunteered and developed a project that explored new methods of destroying harmful stem cells that become cancerous later on, without damaging healthy cells. Of 25,000 Canadian students who participated in regional fairs across Canada, this summer she was among 459 finalists chosen to attend the showcase event of the Youth Science Foundation of Canada in Truro, Nova Scotia. Her project blew the judges away and she was awarded top honours. *Grip* asked Emily: how does she do it all?

***Grip:*** As of Grade 11, you worked as a lab technician at the U of C. How did you juggle work hours, your course load and extracurricular activities?

◀ **Emily Cooley:** During my first summer I barely had time for anything else! In Grades 11 and 12, it was a challenge balancing my extracurricular activities. I was very involved in my school's debate and speech society, as well as volunteering for several organizations. I took the summers off to recover, and I feel that the time off contributed to my success almost as much as the hours spent working on my various projects! There were times when I had to put whatever I was working on in the lab to rest while I focused on debating, and there were also times when I had to let down my debate partner when there was

a weekend of lab work that simply couldn't be missed. Being able to prioritize effectively while weighing the consequences is one of the most priceless tools of any busy high school student!

***Grip:*** On average, how many hours of sleep and leisure time did you get in the school year?

**EC:** I am very grumpy if I miss out on my eight hours of sleep at night! There were certainly exceptions (such as those long, late nights before a science fair) but I always managed to find a reasonable amount of time to sit back, relax and enjoy life. I love to read, play guitar, sing and cook. I also have wonderful friends and family who are always willing to help me decompress after a hard day. Taking time for me and having fun has really helped me maintain the energy to do everything.

***Grip:*** Was it hard to stay focused in school?

**EC:** It was very hard at times! I had to take time that was specific for each of the things I was working on so that I didn't get too wrapped up in any one thing. My teachers were very helpful in keeping me on track and being kind to me when I was too swamped to get my assignments done by their original due dates.

***Grip:*** Do you have any tips for our readers?

**EC:** Go with your gut feeling. Whatever you do, don't get pressured into anything you do not feel passionate about. This is a time for you to set out and discover things about you. Following your dreams is just a first step towards living your life with passion and conviction. ☐



# Quiz: How Balanced Is Your Life?

By Megan Ryland

Is your life perfectly balanced between what you like to do and what you have to do? Or is it a teeter totter where you bump along and soar or thud to the ground? Take this quiz and find out

## 1. Which best describes your life's journey?

- a) A monster truck rally
- b) A ferris wheel, with peaks and valleys
- c) A walk in the park

## 2. By the end of the day...

- a) You've realized that 24 hours is not enough
- b) You've remembered the last thing that you need to do, which you cram in before bed
- c) You're ready to go to sleep; you've had a full day

## 3. You have a project due tomorrow, but your best friend's birthday party is tonight, do you...

- a) Party! You'll hand it in late or never. You can't miss her birthday
- b) Scramble to finish the project and show up late to the party
- c) Already have the project done, so it's no problem

## 4. How do you keep yourself organized?

- a) You don't. It's a problem
- b) Your palm pilot, post-its and writing on your hand
- c) Everything goes on the calendar

## 5. Would your friends say that you've got it together?

- a) Oh stop, you're killing me!
- b) Not really, but I'm no worse than they are
- c) I'm the King of Together

## 6. You have soccer practice, a book report and a family dinner all in one evening, this is...

- a) Going to be a disaster
- b) Not fun, but will just mean a late night finishing the book report
- c) An average night in your life, so you'll squeeze it all in

## 7. A huge exam is coming up and your plan for studying is...

- a) Cramming the day before, as usual
- b) A little weak, but you plan to start a few days before
- c) Starting as soon as the exam is announced

## 8. When you're dating someone, your friends...

- a) Complain that they never see you
- b) Have to share their quality time with the new special someone
- c) Hardly notice; you've got enough time for everyone

## 9. When you want to get together with friends, you tend to...

- a) Be spontaneous. Who plans fun ahead?
- b) Talk to your friends a little beforehand, to figure out rides, etc.
- c) Plan a few days in advance, so the timing works for everyone

**Note:** This quiz is for fun only. It's not a diagnostic tool. Now get back on the tightrope!



## 10. Your friends and family can count on you to...

- a) Have good intentions
- b) Keep promises
- c) Be organized and reliable

### MOSTLY As – FLAILING FANNY

You aren't waving; you're drowning, as the saying goes. You probably couldn't find balance with a map. You're overwhelmed and can't keep track of everything you have to do. It's time to make a change. Prioritize, manage your time, wear a watch and make a list: small steps in the right direction.

### MOSTLY Bs – AVERAGE ANDREW

You've got the basics, but you're no expert yet. You know that striking the right balance between work and play is important, but things don't always go as planned. Keep trying to organize your time carefully to suit all of your needs – from academic to social. Remember: practice makes perfect.

### MOSTLY Cs – TOGETHER TEDDY

You are a regular acrobat. Have you ever considered a career in tightrope walking? You are a master at balancing school, your friends, family, sports, clubs and maybe even a job. Not everyone can keep that many plates spinning at once; keep up the great work!





# Balancing my lack of balance

After nearly two years in the planning, my elder brother was getting married. It brought us all closer together – for a while

By Scaachi Koul

**I had never seen my mother this happy**

before. It was the winter of 2005. The window sills were covered in snow, and the blistering wind outside whipped trees around the house as my parents and I sat in the living room. My mother had just received a phone call that proved to be a greater Christmas gift than anyone else could've tried to give.

Her only son was getting married.

My brother sold me out and proposed to his girlfriend of three years. All the years he reassured my weeping mother that he would never get married were a hoax. The wedding was set for summer 2007, and already my mother was preparing.

But despite my loathing for weddings in all their uselessness, I thought that it would at least prove as good writing fodder. If your family is neurotic enough – and mine certainly is – writing about weddings is perhaps the easiest thing to do.

So when my brother's wedding finally rolled in July, my first thoughts were – after, of course, "Why, God, why?" and "I don't have to go, do I? I mean, I barely know the guy" – that it would at least be good to write about.

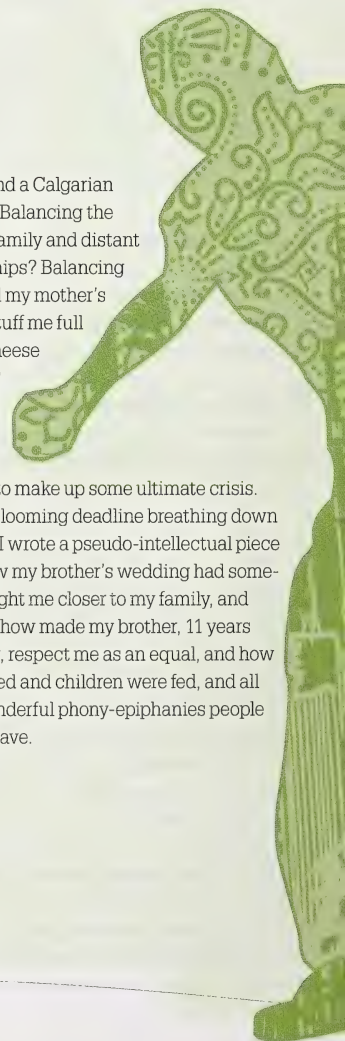
*Grip* magazine began collecting articles for their fall issue, and they told me that the theme would be 'balance', so I could use my brother's wedding if I saw fit. This, I thought, would be one of the easiest pieces I would ever write.

It turns out that being wrong is also perfect writing matter.

His wedding should've proven great material for writing about balance. Balancing Indian

culture and a Calgarian lifestyle? Balancing the need for family and distant relationships? Balancing a diet and my mother's need to stuff me full of fried cheese leftovers? I could've at least had the decency to make up some ultimate crisis.

With a looming deadline breathing down my neck, I wrote a pseudo-intellectual piece about how my brother's wedding had somehow brought me closer to my family, and had somehow made my brother, 11 years my senior, respect me as an equal, and how wars ended and children were fed, and all those wonderful phony-epiphanies people seem to have.





I can't say I was lying; at the time, my entire family felt closer. I felt like my brother and I had forged a thin, but tangible connection, and my cousins, ranging from 10 to 15 years older than me, had come to treat me as if I were their age. I concluded the piece with a sappy and entirely superfluous paragraph about how my mother

and I laid down our arms, and stopped arguing so frequently. All of my words hinged on the fact that I had balanced life and family. At the time, I believed I had.

I sent it a day late of my deadline in the middle of nowhere on a vacation in British Columbia.

After sending it, I spent my days waiting for angry phone calls, or dismissal slips. It would be the end of my writing career; last year of high school and I've already failed everyone who ever loved me. Great, I'm a Woody Allen character.

I'm not good looking enough to be Scarlett Johansson, so that must mean... OH MAN, I'M WOODY ALLEN!

But, the Internet connection that I sent it through was fragile at best, so with what I'm sure were angels guiding me, my editor never got the piece. She never got the chance to reply with passive aggressive comments like, "Have you ever thought about a career in, say, government?" and I was spared humiliation.

When she sent me an e-mail asking for the article, I realized my second chance. I sat down at my computer and began rewriting my piece. But as I began typing out how I attained my so-called balance, I realized that

**If life is like walking a tightrope, then I'm struggling and waving my arms frantically to stay balanced.**

I no longer felt balanced.

My older cousins had all returned to their distant homes to deal with their new and separate lives away from me. My brother reverted to being a man I happened to be related to that comes for dinner every Sunday, and my mother and I began arguing again about trivial things like hair elastics and what to put in a salad. There was no balance of all-around life I had found during those five days of the wedding. Again, everything was uneven.

But in this case, what does balance become? If what you find comfortable refuses to stay long enough for you to record it, can it even be called balance? How do you get it? And more importantly, how do you make it stay? As soon as you think you've got your life ordered the way it should be, something changes it.

And will someone please tell me that it's okay to eat meat in a salad?

I had meant to write about the struggle and ultimate success to finding balance. Life, as it should, usually balances out if you let it. Finding

the balance itself is perhaps the entire point of having it all. And while it's possible to balance some of the other things in your life, like work, or school, or sports, balancing people is an entirely different issue that maybe shouldn't be tackled, because no one has the right answer.

I'm not going to find balance, so I quit trying.

Maybe one day I'll make peace with my mother for good, but it's unlikely. Perhaps at some point, my brother and I will have a Ross and Monica Geller relationship, but it's not foreseeable. One day I could become really close with my cousins, but I won't force it. If life is like walking a tight rope, then I'm struggling and waving my arms frantically to stay balanced. I've fallen before, and I'll fall again. That's the point, and I refuse cheating it.

But I still don't see what's wrong with putting chicken breast in a salad. ■





# No Idle Hands



It's all about staying busy, and I know what it's like to take on as much – and just a little bit more – than I can handle

By Shelley Astill

**T**he spotlights dim; in a deep voice, the announcer introduces the next act: "Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, children of all ages... the most terrific, tremendous, stupendous juggling act of all time. Here tonight for your eyes only, right here under the big top... Please put your hands together for the fabulous...Juggling Teen!"

If you had the time to read the newspaper in May 2007, you already know that a Statistics Canada study conducted in 2005 showed Canadian teens are busier than other teens in nine countries that belong to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Seriously, this is the real world, far from the stereotype of the lazy teen with his/her feet on the couch. Canadian teens are ranked first for average number of hours spent on unpaid and paid work in a school week, and they worked more than seven hours of unpaid and paid labour per day in 2005. That's a 50-hour work week!



Adolescent life can consist of a whole series of juggling acts: work, school, friends, sports and family. It can be quite the performance. But I'll let you in on a little secret: it doesn't have to be that way. Life is what you make it. Here is a look into mine.

I think I was born busy. I don't remember a time when I wasn't doing something, or talking about doing something. School is stressful enough, but when you add sports, work and the drama of everyday life, it can get to be way too much to handle. How do you find the balance? There is no single answer or a set way of organizing things that works for everybody. Everyone is different and needs a plan that works for them. For me, I only take on jobs that I like doing, when I have the choice. If I do things I enjoy, I'll put more passion, energy and time into it.

To keep all my activities under control, I write everything down where I can see it. Having a reminder takes the strain off. Also, I like to set out all the materials I need for the next day the night before. Doing this allows me to sleep in longer, which is a bonus, and it doesn't cause a rush in the morning.

Ever heard the saying "there aren't enough hours in a day"? Statistics Canada found that most teens aged 15 to 19 spend more than nine hours a day (Monday to Friday) on school work, homework, paid work and housework and nearly four hours a day on these tasks on Saturdays and Sundays. About 60 per cent of us spend two hours and 20 minutes on homework every day. If you calculate that in one day the average teenager spends nine hours sleeping, six and a half hours at school, and two and a half hours eating, then by the time we have supper, 75 per cent of the day is gone!

Trying to cram more than six or seven hours of work in one day just doesn't work. My problem is that I try to overstuff my calendar by bumping projects to the next day. That doesn't work either. Nothing gets finished, and I end up behind on my projects.

And I don't even work part time. According to the study, teens with part-time jobs where

they work more than 20 hours a week reported spending far less time on homework and have way more personal stress: 16 per cent of teens surveyed said they are workaholics; 39 per cent reported that they're pressured to take on more than they can handle; more than 60 per cent said they stayed up late and/or woke up early to get stuff done.

Apparently, your family environment has a lot to do with how much homework you do. Kids with university-educated parents do more studying, as do kids in intact (not divorced) families and kids from immigrant families.

Boys with Canadian-born parents apparently do much less homework than either! The only good news on that front is that boys are doing more housework than they did 20 years ago. As a rural kid, I spend more time, statistically speaking, on housework than teenage city dwellers.

It's enough to make you want to hide your head in the sand until you reach the age of 20. When I feel like I'm being buried, I see if I can take a quick break. Anyone want to go to the beach? Ha! If only that were possible; but even a song or two on the old iPod will do the trick. The smallest amount of time off can do wonders. Give your brain a little bit of a break then get right back into it. Just remember that finishing one project at 100 per cent of your abilities is better than doing a whole bunch of little things at 50 per cent. ☐

### Read all about it Life Strategies for Teens,

by Jay McGraw

**The Little Book of Confidence,**

by Susan Jeffers

**Manners Made Easy for Teens  
(10 Steps to a Life of Confidence,  
Poise and Respect),**

by June Hines Moore

**The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens,**

by Stephen Covey

### Shelley's top 8 life-juggling tips for teens

- 1) The less clutter in your workspace, the better. **Use desk organizers** to eliminate build-up. This reduces stress when you are trying to find something.
- 2) **Schedule enough time** for travelling to and fro. If you have to leave five minutes early from work, a meeting or a sporting event to get to your next activity, then do so. Rushing around just makes you feel overwhelmed and you get there frazzled.
- 3) Make a to-do list every day. Write everything down on paper, in an agenda or **even on your mirror** with liquid eyeliner. (Don't worry, it comes off... just don't use the waterproof stuff... ha-ha). Trying to remember everything is a hassle.
- 4) Don't sweat the small stuff. Finish the bigger, harder projects first, while your mind is still fresh. Once those are done, **you'll feel so relieved** you'll have the brainpower to take on the little assignments.
- 5) Have a bath. Warm water soothes sore muscles and gives you a chance to **relax and empty your mind** of thoughts. (Adding bubbles never hurts, either!)
- 6) **Listen to music** that relaxes you as you work. Who wouldn't want to hear the sound of ocean waves crashing on the shore while you're doing homework? The slow rhythm of music you know and love, with or without words, is less distracting and keeps your pace slow and steady.
- 7) Develop a routine. Make a schedule that **works for your life**. Follow it and make sure to dedicate at least half an hour between shifts for down time.
- 8) **Remember**, you are worth all the time in the world.





# The Golden Gift of Persuasion

By Jason Hong  
and Katrina Genuis

*Grip* asked two Alberta Debate and Speech Association members to spout off. They don't *really* advocate for either side, they're merely competitive types willing to argue for the thrill of crushing the opponent in the vice-grip of logic.

## **Q:** Are all museums created equal? Should the Alberta Government fund the Big Valley Creation Museum?

### **Jason Hong argues for the "no" side:**

The Big Valley Creation Museum is Canada's first and only non-travelling creation science museum and, as such has raised enormous debate on the validity of the institution. Creationists attempt to use scientific facts to provide evidence of the biblical view of how the world was created.

Located a short drive northeast of Drumheller, and unlike the huge variety of displays at the nearby Royal Tyrell Museum of Paleontology, the Big Valley Creation Museum showcases a fairly short and direct display. While the place carries the word museum in its title, it carries none of the grandiose effect you would expect.

Is an institution that showcases a belief not accepted by science a worthy recipient of public funding? Combined research into the definition of a museum, and the understanding that tax money is to be used for the betterment society, revealed two things,

- 1) The Big Valley Creation Museum hardly qualifies as a true museum.
- 2) the benefits it provides to society are very minimal.

The UK-based Museums Association, the oldest and most respected museum institution in the world, describes a museum as the following: Museums "enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artifacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society."

Even in a world where access to informa-

tion has become widespread, great museums showcase our history, our cultures, and our lives. So does this small house in Big Valley constitute a real museum? It consists of six major displays, which at best take a short afternoon to stroll through. For a place that supports such radical ideas, the lack of displays and evidence make it even less convincing. This is a small, private collection of fossils, with impossible to understand stories attached to them. Its website is one page long, and asks visitors to phone ahead to make sure the museum is open. While the exterior of the displays may look professional, nothing else seems to be.

A great defense to all this would be to say that, with the funding, the museum would grow. Unfortunately, even then, the most important question still remains: does it serve society? The funding we are talking about here is the public's money; and as such should be used to serve the interests of the public.

Creation science has been rejected by both the Roman Catholic Church and all major scientific institutions. If the church is based on religious experience and faith, and science based on empirical facts, creation science treads on a tightrope of faulty evidence and far-out beliefs. People trust a museum to provide them with accurate analytical facts, rather than be told a story with little basis to it. Two types of people will visit this museum: those who believe that dinosaurs were indeed the creation of God, and

those who wish to study Christian worshipers. Does it really serve society at large? The answer is: only to a minute extent. Of three million Albertans, how many people's lives have been bettered by the existence of this museum? Few, is likely to be the answer.

Should the Big Valley Creation Museum receive funding?

The place itself seems to answer that question for us. It's a small house in a small town, exhibiting poor evidence for an incredibly flawed idea, serving a handful of believers that live among us. Next thing you know, we'll be asked to fund the Earth Is Flat Museum.





**Katrina Genuis argues for the “yes” side:**

In any scientific field, progress can only occur when contemporary ideas are challenged by new evidence and different ideas. Examples of fringe groups that have stood their ground against the masses and, as a result, have revealed groundbreaking scientific discoveries are numerous throughout history.

One would think that after centuries of this pattern, the scientific community would have learned to accept differing opinions as

a potential sign of progress. However when the Big Valley Creation Science Museum opened this past June, it became clear that this is not the case.

The Big Valley museum is the first permanent Canadian display in support of the theory that the earth was created by God, and according to biblical description. The museum's founder, Harry Nibourg, did not receive public funding; he personally financed it. Why is the government not funding this museum? Don't they all deserve equal and fair treatment?

The government does not have the responsibility of providing funds for the special interests or endeavors of all groups. This would be financially impossible and irresponsible. However, if one truly believes in scientific progress, then the government should not exclusively support what is politically correct, either. When it comes to government funding, impartiality should be a critical requirement; the government should be blind to philosophical beliefs. Scientific evidence must be judged independently, even if the beliefs happen to belong to religious people.

If this evidence happens to support a faith position, demonstration of the evidence should not be excluded from government funding. In order for museums to receive

public funding, they must fulfill certain established criteria related to the scientific validity of the presented material. As long as the Big Valley Museum can back up its exhibits with evidence, it should be considered worthy of public funding.

A recent Smithsonian Sternberg Peer Review controversy illustrates the existing bias against scientific evidence that can be used to support a creation theory. An employee of the Smithsonian Institution was fired for publishing an article in support of intelligent design. Although the article went through the peer review process, its publication caused serious upheaval and staff changes. Although the evidence in the article was judged to be worthy of publication and scientific consideration, the current system is so biased against alternative perspectives, or scientific evidence that is linked to religion, that it is difficult for the full spectrum of evidence to reach the stage of public debate.

The central issue when it comes to the funding of the Big Valley Creation Museum is not whether or not creation or evolution is correct, it is that the government is demonstrating bias. Progress is best facilitated by open presentation of the full spectrum of scientific evidence. The government and the public cannot be afraid to look at different ideas and theories, and to dispute contemporary ideas. As long as the Big Valley Creation Science Museum stays within this realm, the government should consider public funding for this unusual and unique museum. ▣





# A Mug of Trouble

You might think you can't get by without coffee, but there's a price to staying awake

By Allison McPhail

**These days, everyone is so busy it feels as though there aren't enough hours in a day.** Teens worry about school, work, fitness and extra-curricular activities. Getting a full eight hours of sleep simply doesn't seem possible.

For many people, caffeine and other legal stimulants are a perceived necessity. In moderate amounts, this isn't an issue. However, few people realize the limits on caffeine consumption recommended by Health Canada.

A healthy adult should not have more than 400 to 450 mg of caffeine a day, or three 8 oz (237 mL) cups of coffee. Of course, few people drink a mere eight ounces; generally cups are much larger. Two large coffees or a single energy drink can lead to a long list of side-effects such as irritability, diarrhea and trouble sleeping.

It can be difficult to regulate your intake as caffeine can be labelled as kola, guarana, cocoa, and yerba maté. Caffeine is found in chocolate and many medications for colds and headaches with up to 1,000 mg in a daily dose.

Coffee remains in your system for six hours, making it difficult to fall asleep and degrading the quality of sleep, once you do. This is a particular issue for students, because caffeine is often a standby for late-night study sessions. The result is a vicious circle of sleep deprivation treated with caffeine, which leads to further bouts of insomnia.

Trevor Curtis, engineering student at the University of British Columbia, says most students are aware that these habits can be dangerous, but continue to fuel themselves.

Students see the benefits of being able to stay up late for extra study time. Unfortunately, this can affect your grades as well as your health.

Curtis has a friend who developed a habit of poor sleep patterns and drank two or three energy drinks a day. Her moods became erratic, and her energy levels would crash suddenly. Her efforts to do well caused her to start failing classes. "One time, she stayed up all night studying for a math test, and then fell asleep in the middle of it," he says.

Coffee and energy drinks are equally popular in high schools. Grade 12 student Cyrena Sitter says she averages five energy drinks a week. "Without a boost in the morning, I struggle to stay awake in classes, much less concentrate on teachers' lectures," she says.

So far, reports of severe health effects cannot be decisively linked to energy drinks. Many advertisements recommend their use for the young, late at night or for athletic purposes. This is exactly what some researchers are worried about. Late night drinks are not only detrimental to getting a full night's sleep; they are often accompanied by alcohol consumption, which can greatly increase the health risks.

Energy drinks used for athletic performance have the opposite effect of sports drinks – instead of re-hydrating the system, they dehydrate, and research suggests electrolytes may be depleted. Children should not really have caffeine but, if they do, Health Canada recommends low levels. Energy drinks can exceed these by as much as four to six times. Plain old water is the best energy drink. **■**



## 8 tips for happy snoozing

- 1) Stick to a regular schedule. Late nights confuse your body and affect sleep quality.
- 2) Naps can be beneficial but, after 3 p.m., can interfere with night sleep.
- 3) Keep your bedroom dark and quiet.
- 4) Avoid caffeine for six hours before bedtime.
- 5) If it takes more than 30 minutes to fall asleep, get up and do something boring/peaceful for 10 to 20 minutes.
- 6) Exercise, but avoid heavy workouts in the evening.
- 7) Warm milk before bed can help.
- 8) A hot bath an hour before bed relaxes you and prepares your body for rest.



# Help Wanted

Got a niggling question that no-one can seem to answer, or that you're too afraid to ask your units, teacher or best friend? Send it to us. We guarantee anonymity, and we're beyond embarrassment. We'll find an expert to answer the most persistent question you have related to any topic: relationships, school, sexuality, puberty, drugs, love, life, and the pursuit of happiness. So... what are you waiting for?

**Question:** My mom hates my Goth look. How can I reassure her that I'm really okay?  
– *Dangling Dahlia*

*Dear Dahlia,*  
It is likely your mom is worried about you because of the negative media around Goth culture lately. The best thing to do is to talk to her and soothe her fears. Ask her where her information is coming from and (calmly) discuss any misconceptions she might have. Tell her what it is you like about this style or group, and make sure she knows you are not depressed, or hurting yourself in some way. Let her know what the positives are about being Goth, and what it means to you. Introduce her to your friends, and vice versa. Once she sees you're truly okay, she'll relax.

**Question:** I finished school two months ago and while I was there I was accused of having anorexia. Some days I forgot to bring my lunch, other times I pretended I forgot. I could go all day without eating and still feel fine. I don't really want to get my parents involved with this. (They just finished discussing other things with me.) Some people said they were worried about me, and my health. Do I have anorexia?  
– *Missy Meals*

*Dear Missy,*  
Anorexia is a true psychiatric disorder, not just a phase. Its diagnosis is not just based on whether a person misses meals, but on a whole host of diagnostic criteria. The hallmark of anorexia or bulimia is a strong fear of gaining weight and/or a strong desire to be thinner than one is naturally.

To be diagnosed with anorexia, a person has to have lost 15 per cent or more of their body weight, be fearful of weight gain and often see themselves as fat while others see them as too thin. In your case, ask yourself: "Am I trying to lose weight intentionally, and missing meals because I am scared of eating? Why are the people around me concerned?"

Many patients with an eating disorder can feel okay without eating for a while, but eventually, they will start to develop serious physical and psychological consequences – not to mention the strong urge to binge.

If you have lost significant weight, and are eating very little, not because of a physical problem but because of a fear of eating more, and if you see yourself as heavy when others think you are too thin, then you may be at risk for having Anorexia Nervosa. You should see a doctor.

**Question:** How can I tell when teasing has become bullying?  
– *Tommy the Teased*

*Dear Tommy,*  
Teasing is supposed to be fun for both parties. Whatever the joke is, you should get a kick out of it too. If you don't, something is wrong. But, there is a lot of teasing that goes on in the halls of most schools. It's a way most kids have of relating to each other. So here's how to tell the difference.

Ask yourself: are your feelings being consistently hurt? Are you being physically manipulated or hurt? Do you feel like you are being controlled by this other person to make you do something you don't want to do?

If you've answered 'yes' to any of the above, it might not be teasing. You might be dealing with a bully. Another good question to ask yourself is: would I do this to someone else? If the answer is no, it might be time to talk to the person. Be assertive and ask them to stop. Then, get outside help. Talk to a teacher; get some support from your friends so you know you aren't alone.

.....  
**Help Wanted** is provided for general informational purposes only and is not intended to replace consultations with your doctor or to provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any personal medical and health questions that you may have.

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or mail **Help Wanted**, c/o Grip magazine  
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Edmonton, AB T5J 1E3



## What's on Kiro's iPod:

Minstrel's Prayer - Cartel

My Sundown - Jimmy Eat World

Walk By Faith - Jeremy Camp

Priceless - Copeland

The Difference - The Wallflowers

Connected - Means

The Reason - Hoobastank

Grey Street - Dave Matthews

Old Habits Die Hard - Ten Second Epic

Iris - Goo Goo Dolls

Sad Waltzes of Pietro Crespi - Owen

Much Farther to Go - Rosie Thomas







# Soul Patrol

A Calgary band rocks out and delivers empowering messages. With a new deal in the works, you may be hearing more from this powerhouse soon

By Rosy Lee

**Pop rock band Kiros is no stranger when** it comes to doing it on their own. After making a full-time commitment to music back in 2004, the band has gone through two EPs, one full-length album and a North American tour as an independent band. With a full agenda on the road and inside the recording studio, Kiros has achieved a lot in only a few years. And with a name that, in Greek, means "a moment of divine time," it's obvious that Kiros has caught the perfect moment to skip through the pearly gates of accomplishment – with plenty of time to spare.

The Calgary-based band comprises two original members: guitarist Ryan Guerra and lead vocalist/bassist Barry MacKichan, as well as two newer additions to the band: Jon Purschke on guitar and Tyler Wells on the drums. They range in age from 20 to 24.

*Grip* caught up with Guerra and his telephone calling card in the middle of Kiros's Ontario-Quebec tour. "When Barry approached me in high school, I thought it'd be kinda cool," recalls Guerra of his foray into music. "Rather than reading out of a book and playing other people's

music, all of a sudden it was a chance for me to be creative rather than just sit there and practice and do what you're told." With Purschke joining the band in April 2006 and Wells coming on board later that year, the completion of the four-piece band brought around a new and more sophisticated sound that fans loved.

Kiros's beginnings weren't out of the ordinary. But when the group, still stubbornly independent, completed its 2005 Warped Tour it became apparent that Kiros might just be around for the long haul. The Canada-and-U.S. tour wasn't Kiros's first, but it was certainly a series of shows that got them noticed.

"The tour was booked for us and we knew people would come and people would listen to us," says Guerra. "It was a little overwhelming being Kiros, playing with these huge bands like Offspring, when kids wanted to see them. But we had a good response and sold lots of CDs."

The Warped Tour brought a lot of attention to Kiros and in 2006 the band was confirmed to participate in the east coast leg of Extreme Tour. Kiros's high-energy shows and hope-



# "We like our music – don't get me wrong, but we definitely are more passionate about our message than anything."

inspired lyrics gripped new and old fans alike. The video of their single *A Second Chance* saw airtime on *MuchMusic* through popular fan request.

"When we first started out, we were just doing it for fun. But when we decided to go full time, we kind of stopped and backtracked and really looked at what we wanted to get out of the band. Ever since then, we've been a band more about our mission than a band about our music," Guerra explains. "We like our music – don't get me wrong," he quickly adds, "but we definitely are more passionate about our message than anything."

## The music, the message

"Growing up, we all lock on to different things," Guerra says about the band's purpose. "Basically we worked on things that we've lacked and things we've longed for growing up. We've tried to provide that any way we can."

While some Kiros members describe themselves as personally Christian, Guerra says their music is not. "We play the same venues as other bands," he says. "And I never saw faith as a music genre." He does say that music is about bringing hope and that their message is one of self-worth and empowerment.

Of course, Kiros isn't all talk, or all song. A year and a half ago, World Vision approached the band during a festival in Edmonton to ask if Kiros wanted to work with them. "I think we all experienced it differently," Guerra says of the band's response to that request. "But for me the big moment was when he said, 'yeah, you guys should really work with us' and in my mind I was like, 'yeah, cool.'" But Guerra had a hard time believing the opportunity was real. "Then the World Vision guy took a stack of 30 portfolios representing different kids in need. 'He put them in my hand and all of a sudden my entire world turned upside down. Thirty lives were sitting in my hand,'" Guerra says. Kiros displays the kids' portfolios alongside their CDs at concerts, to solicit sponsorship on behalf of World Visions. "I could take these and make a difference."

With Kiros's heavily weighted lyrics and epic-



proportioned rock riffs, it's almost easy to feel inspired, and even optimistic, for their chances of making a difference in the world. Guerra tells me about World Vision and its connection to Kiros's own message. "The kids in these other countries deserve a chance at real life and really anyone, pretty much no matter how much money they make in North America, can afford to give up a dollar a day. We spend way more than that on anything."

## On the horizon

For Kiros, rocking the world of independence was a stepping-stone to success. The band has performed and recorded on their own for three years without any major dissonance. "It's been cool. I mean, things might be negative but we're always going to be alright," Guerra says.

But Kiros has been through some crazy bumps on the road as well – and quite literally too. Once, in Pennsylvania, the band was stranded at the side of a highway with just a flaming transmission for company. With no room for options, the guys abandoned the old tour van and caught a ride to their next show. "I can't even tell you what it's like being stranded in a town of 500 people in the middle of the night," Guerra says.

Their CD, *A Single Strand*, was distributed across Canadian stores on August 14, 2007 – the same evening that the band signed with Canadian indie label Torque Recording Company. While the band had seen a few offers in previous years, actually getting signed by a label started to become more important to them – especially as time progressed and no satisfying deal was drawn up. Guerra confesses that independence worked for them; no one had really brought a lot to the table for Kiros until Kevin Gales, founder of Torque, dropped the band a request to talk. "By the next day I was on the phone with him and we were already talking about working with him. He had some cool ideas and he's a cool, hard working guy."

With the release of *A Single Strand* and the signing with Torque, 2007 promises to be a huge year for Kiros. "But we're definitely far from done," Guerra says. "We've done things we never would have fathomed. If someone came up to me and said, 'Wanna be on *MuchMusic*?' – well, I would never have thought myself to be there." He laughs, and it seems that there are a lot of unfathomable things happening that Kiros may never have dreamed of, including possible U.S. distribution of *A Single Strand*, as well as upcoming tour dates and videos shoots. They just finished shooting *Of Wolves and Angels* for *Much Music*.

There seems to be no reason for the four-piece band to slow down in upcoming years, especially with their ever-growing fan base. "It has only been about 10 days and people are already singing along, knowing our songs front to back. It's so rewarding knowing that people believe in you, no matter how your day went."

But not to worry, Kiros still has a firm grip on reality. "It's a work-ethic based industry," Guerra says of the music business. "There are so many bands these days you have to make sure you're working the hardest. Never give up."

Even if your van catches fire in the middle of the night. ☐



# Six Week Exam Planner



If you take a **balanced** approach and plan **ahead**, there's no reason that **exams** should put **terror** in your **heart** or a crimp in your **lifestyle**

By Lana Hall

**F**or years, whenever exam period rolled around, Deirdre Haynes, now 19, slept with a plastic salad bowl beside her bed. What, in the name of instant noodles, is the point of that? "I used to get nightmares," says Haynes. "I'd dream I'd failed all my exams and then I'd wake up in a flat panic and puke out of sheer dread." Haynes, a soft-spoken, British Columbia high school graduate, grimaces at the memory.

Haynes is hardly alone. A recent study from the Canadian Centre for Addiction and Mental Health tells us that 30 per cent of student respondents experienced lack of sleep, were

under constant stress, and exhibited feelings of unhappiness and depression. And, up until 10th grade, Haynes too, fell under this umbrella. "I was never really a bad student or anything," she concedes. "But anxiety was about to ruin my academic life. I knew I'd never survive university if I didn't get a handle on it." So Haynes, armed with determination and a pink spiral notebook, confessed her pre-exam panic to a teacher she trusted. "And you know what she said? She said, 'I'm glad you told me, Deirdre. We can get through this. Let's take a look.' I felt like a moron for not asking for help sooner.



Turned out all I needed was some study structure and some one-on-one advice."

Haynes, who now aspires to become a child psychologist, was one of the lucky ones. Many other Canadian students never receive help when it comes to exam preparation or academic stress. Instead they fall through the cracks, bogged down by self-esteem issues, sketchy grades, debilitating anxiety. Worse, some report self-medicating with alcohol or other substances. And even though crooner John Mayer once said, "High school is like a spork: it's a crappy spoon and a crappy fork, so in the end it's just plain useless," it's still worth it to get a handle on those exams. Your future may depend on it.

B.C.-based tutor, Sheila McDonnagh, puts the emphasis on planning ahead. "Sometimes it's not about prepping harder, it's about prepping smarter," she says. McDonnagh suggests penning a schedule ahead of time. "Set aside blocks of time to devote to studying and know when you work best. I have students who work best in the evening, and students who prefer to study first thing in the morning. Know how you operate and work within it."

Next in line on McDonnagh's list is the "how" of exam prep. She explains that students learn in different contexts: by visualizing, by reading, or by listening. Zooming in on your best way to learn increases your ability to retain information.

No cramming at 3 a.m. please. Who can focus when they're delirious with sleep deprivation?

### Tips for a balanced plan

Monday morning dawns and despite your fondest wish, a meteor has not demolished your school, thus cancelling the week's exams. Never fear: these in-class tips will help you survive the experience.

- **Get a good night's sleep:** No cramming at 3 a.m. please. Have a relaxing shower the night before and let your brain rest up for the day ahead. Who can focus when they're delirious with sleep deprivation?
- **Don't rush:** Running late will only escalate your panic. Don't get up too early, but make sure you have plenty of time to get ready and get there on time.
- **Bring what you need:** Favourite Garfield pen? Take it. Retro apple-green calculator? Take it. SUV-sized quilted tote bag with matching coffee cup? Um, don't take it.
- **Eat!** Save time for breakfast and grab something nutritious, such as oatmeal with milk and a banana. Planning on chowing down with a mocha and a box of Timbits? You'll be out for the count in a carb-induced stupor before you can say, "Keep the change."
- **You remember more than you think you do:** the Alberta Mental Health Board offers this tidbit: "If you don't remember the answer to a question, don't panic. Take a deep breath, relax, and move on to the next question. Sometimes other questions on the exam can trigger your memory."
- **Slow down:** Nobody's breathing down your neck and wielding an axe. Scan the exam before you begin to get acquainted with the lay of the land. Pace yourself and allow more time for questions that are worth more marks.





"If you're a visual learner, for example," she says, "try sketching timelines for history class instead of trying to suffer through the textbook pages."

As Haynes eventually did, McDonnagh advocates for getting help from teachers. "Teachers are in their chosen line of work because they want to help you," she says. "It never hurts to ask them for tips, like the format of the exam. They might tell you it's multiple choice, or heavy on short paragraphs. That way you know where to focus some of your study energy." Alternately, McDonnagh encourages students to clarify with the teacher sections of the course they are struggling with. "But remember to do it well before exam time," she adds.

Talking to your teacher in the weeks leading up to exams can help you identify the broad thrusts and themes of the course. After you

speak to him or her, make a list of the concepts and code in a way you'll find easy to use.

For example:

**!= areas of the class I already know**

**\*= emphasis of the class is here**

**0= areas of the class I don't know**

**1,2,3...= things I need to study, in order**

Then there's the basic details: make sure you have a quiet, tidy, and non-distracting study space. Take breaks to get a drink of water, go for a short walk, or do some stretching. "Sometimes," says McDonnagh, "people neglect other aspects of their lifestyle, not realizing the part they play in concentration." She recommends limiting caffeine intake, eating wholesome foods, getting plenty of sleep, and keeping up with the activities you enjoy. "Studying shouldn't take up all your energy, even during

### When things go wrong

Despite your efforts, sometimes it just happens. **Your cat dies** before your geography final. You get sick.

Or maybe, no matter how hard you try, you just can't get the subject matter. Suddenly, it's easy to feel hopeless and slip into, "**I-am-stupid**" mode.

"There's so much emphasis on academia. So if a student struggles in school, often they feel like a massive failure, even though they may have qualities not conventionally recognized in the classroom. High school is like **its own little ecosystem**, and it can be tough." The good news though, is that there's help available, should you desire to seek it out.

Take heart: sometimes even a bombed exam can be remedied. "Throughout the year," says high school tutor Sheila McDonnagh, "provincial exams are offered. That means that if you want to redo an exam you did in January, you'll have another chance in April, June, or even August for some courses."

For those tests that come with a do-over, you'll have to **pay extra attention** to the parts of the course that stumped you. But if even the prospect of re-taking the exam doesn't make you feel better, McDonnagh suggests making an appointment with a school counsellor or teacher.

exam periods," she says. "Make sure you make time for friends, and other activities you enjoy. That's the best way to combat stress."

And finally: "don't be afraid to look into tutoring. Some students I work with all year 'round. But lots end up calling just around exam time, because they want some reinforcement on a certain subject, or some one-on-one review."

And last but not least: Celebrate! Reward yourself for a job well done. Burn those study notes and dance around them naked. Okay maybe not. 🐾





# Exam Planner

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Week 1</b> Take a walk! Get 30-60 minutes of exercise every day	Read last week's chapter & class notes. Write a list of subjects covered and identify trouble spots	Review class notes; read chapters & take notes	Review class handouts & quizzes	Review class notes; read chapters & take notes	Review class notes; read chapters & take notes	Has my list of trouble spots been addressed? If not, see teacher	For each subject, write a brief summary of what I've learned. Tidy up notes & binders
<b>Week 2</b> Eat right! Lay off the junk food	Read last week's chapter & class notes. Write a list of subjects covered in each course and identify trouble spots	Review class notes; read chapters & take notes	Review class handouts & quizzes	Review class notes; read chapters & take notes	Review class notes; read chapters & take notes	Has my list of trouble spots been addressed? If not, see teacher	For each subject, write a brief summary of what I've learned. Tidy up notes & binders
<b>Week 3</b> Pack a lunch! Save some cash	Read last week's chapter & class notes. Write a list of subjects covered in each course and identify trouble spots	Review class notes; read chapters & take notes	Review class handouts & quizzes. For each class, identify weak spots. Rank what I need to study 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> ...	Review class notes; read chapters & take notes	Review class notes; read chapters & take notes	Has my list of trouble spots been addressed? If not, see teacher. Tidy up notes & binders	Meet with a friend to study & discuss the week's course content. Summarize content & compare
<b>Week 4</b> Call the boss! Ask to cut my hours this week & next. Book the whole exam week off	Read notes. Write a list of subjects covered in each course and identify trouble spots	Review class notes; read chapters & take notes	Review handouts & quizzes. For each class, identify weak spots. Rank what I need to study 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> ...	Review class notes & chapters to date	Review class notes; read chapters & take notes.	See teachers and ask about exams. What's the format? Which areas have most emphasis? Any tips?	Meet with a friend to study & discuss the week's course content. Summarize content & compare
<b>Week 5</b> Sleep! Go to bed and get up at regular times this week and next	Read notes. Write a list of subjects covered and identify trouble spots	Review class notes & chapters to date	Review handouts & quizzes. For each class, identify weak spots. Rank what I need to study 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> ...	Review class notes & chapters to date	Review class notes & chapters to date. Tidy up notes & binders	See teachers about any last minute concerns	Meet with a friend to study & discuss the week's course content. Summarize content & compare
<b>Week 6</b> Slow down! Because I followed this plan, there are no all-nighters this week. Relax and review.	Take the week off work. Review material for tomorrow's test	Exams. Review material for tomorrow's test	Review material for tomorrow's test	Review class notes & chapters to date	Exams. Review material for tomorrow's test	Last Exam. Celebrate!	Hang with my friends



# This is **Kyle Tugwell**

He's one sandwich  
artist who also appears at  
international sporting events.  
And he's jumping the way with

Story by *Stephanie Smith*  
Photography by *Ewan Nicholson*





### As I take a seat across from 16-year-old

Okotoks resident Kyle Tugwell, it doesn't seem like I am facing one of Canada's top trampolinists. Apart from a t-shirt with a gymnastics slogan, nothing about him suggests that this Subway sandwich artist has been all over the world to compete in the noble art of trampolining.

Born and raised in the Calgary area, Kyle seems to be like every other teenager. One of four siblings, this Highwood High School student strikes me as normal. Only when I ask him about his hobby-turned-passion do I realize how extraordinary Kyle actually is.

Trampolining is a competitive sport in which gymnasts perform acrobatic tricks while bouncing on a trampoline. Although not very widely known, the sport has been gaining popularity since its introduction in the 2000 Olympic Games. The son of a gymnastics coach, Kyle first started trampolining when he was about nine years old.

"I thought it would be fun," he says, "and because I was already doing gymnastics I knew if I tried it I would get good at it. Plus, my mom kind of pressured me into it."

Kyle's mom, Arlene Sogge, agrees. "We first saw people practicing and we were like 'Oh, cool, what's that?' Kyle decided he wanted to try it, and here we are. That was back in '97."

Nowadays, Kyle takes his inspiration from Canadians like Karen Cockburn, the first trampolinist to win two medals, winning the bronze in women's trampoline at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, becoming the world champion at the 2003 world championships, and winning silver at the 2004 Olympics in Athens. He also looks to Calgarian Kyle Shewfelt, who won in the men's category at the 2004 Olympics in Athens.

Trampolining can involve many different aspects, including synchronized trampoline, in which a pair of athletes perform exactly the same routine of 10 skills at the same time on two adjacent trampolines, and double-mini trampoline, which is a trampoline with a sloped edge. Tricks are performed in the air or as they dismount. At the 2005 World Age Group Trampoline and Tumbling Championships, Kyle made headlines when he was paired with Justin Long of Quebec for a synchronized routine. They developed their routine over the Internet.

"It was pretty hard to do, because he was in Quebec and I was in Alberta," says Kyle. "We



had to develop a routine over the Internet, and practice it individually. We only got to practice the routine together a few times when we met before the competition, but it turned out pretty good, because we placed fourth."

Sogge is pretty proud of her son. "In every competition, he has always placed in the top six in every level since he started."

Unfortunately, the down side to all this prestigious globetrotting is finding financial support.

Kyle's parents pay for all the training, airfare, accommodations, food – you name it. Arlene also says training facilities are practically non-existent. Kyle practices at the Airborne Trampolining and Tumbling Club in Okotoks, the Tugwells cover a lot of miles just driving him to and from practice. "The bottom line is, even with \$1,000 the Alberta Gymnastics Federation, that money is just a tiny bit of the total yearly cost." Arlene hopes that once trampolining and tumbling gain more popularity in Canada, there will be more funding.

Despite the financial setbacks, Kyle Tugwell continues to train as hard as ever. His training routine is usually about three hours a day, four days a week. He works on his routines, runs, stretches, trains on the equipment, and conditions his body.

"It gets pretty tough," he says. "I have to balance my life a lot. I can only work when I'm free, and usually I hang out with my friends from trampolining. But school is a priority. My mom told me when I started that if my grades started to drop, gym was the first to go."

Talk about the balancing act; especially because his training schedule lasts all year. Putting in at least 24 hours a week prepares Kyle for any summer competitions or games. He has set his sights high, on the 2012 Olympics, which will be held in London, England.

"It'll be a good experience even if I don't place," he says. "I like to travel and meet new people, but I love the feeling of falling after you jump. It's like an adrenaline rush." ■





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### History lesson

The modern trampoline was invented by two men, George Nissen and Larry Griswold, in the mid- to late 1930s. Griswold, then the assistant gymnastics coach at the University of Iowa, and Nissen, a tumbler on the University of Iowa gymnastics team, were frequent visitors to the homes and practice areas of local circus performers. Griswold and Nissen worked out with them at the local YMCA, and frequently helped them make or mend their large trapeze nets.

One day, Griswold and Nissen had the idea of bolting together an iron frame and attaching a piece of canvas to it through a system of grommets, which were then attached to the frame by springs. Nissen used it for his tumbling training. He quickly discovered that the YMCA children loved it too. In the 1940s, the two men created the Griswold-Nissen Trampoline & Tumbling Company, using an anglicized version of the Spanish "El trampolin," which means diving board. Trampolining and Tumbling have been World Games sports since 1981.



# Take Charge of Your Health

**Studies** say teens today are **less active** and **healthy** than they should be. Find out how **you can change** that

By Paige Parsons

## Most teens are probably aware of the

dangers that adults face from being overweight or obese. The numerous ads promoting "heart-healthy" choices geared at the 40-plus crowd are hard to miss. But what benefits do exercise and healthy choices offer teens?

Unbeknown to many of us, the unhealthy choices we make are not only affecting our waistlines, but could be doing both severe short- and long-term damage to our physical and mental health. According the Public Health Agency of Canada, over half of Canadians aged five to 17 are not active enough for optimal growth and development.

In the *Canadian Community Health Survey*, completed from 1978 to 1979, researchers found that 12 per cent of Canadian children aged two to 17 were overweight, and three per cent were obese. Times certainly have changed. A 2006 *Community Health Services* newsletter for teachers and school staff published by Edmonton's Capital Health

states that a startling 30 per cent of Canadian children are overweight, and that 15 per cent are obese. Dr. Geoff Ball is the head of the Pediatric Centre for Weight and Health at the Stollery Children's Hospital in Edmonton.

"The percentage of children who are overweight or obese has increased dramatically over the past few decades," says Dr. Ball. "Youth obesity can be attributed to many factors, other than the usual assumption that





### Good for body and mind

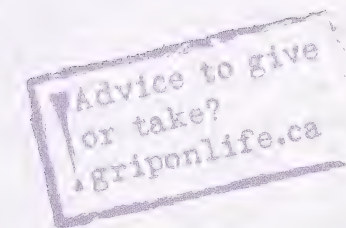
By engaging in physical activity and making healthy choices, teens are likely to benefit in ways that aren't just physical. Dr. Geoff Ball says that there have been proven decreases in depression and anxiety in people who become physically active.

In 2005, a Public Health Agency of Canada report suggested that regular physical activity could help students improve their moods, confidence, self-esteem and self-image. It also said that exercise helped reduce anxiety and prob-

lem behaviours. A study published by the Cambridge University Press in 1999 concluded that exercise is effective in the treatment of clinical depression.

Getting fit not only builds up your muscles, it also builds your self-esteem. Gaining a skill, or accomplishing a feat, such as finishing a 5-km run, will give you a healthy glow that can only be attained by being proud of yourself. So what is the key to receiving both physical and emotional benefits from your physical activity?

"Having fun," says Dr. Ball. "When you have fun while getting fit, you become healthier and happier."



an overweight person is just inactive. Other possible causes are that the overweight individual has no support or guidance from their parents, or that their family simply places little value on nutrition and exercise."

However, in many cases physical activity has simply been set aside in favour of TV, video games and computers. Campbell's *Survey on Health and Wellness*, conducted in 1988, asked a group of 12- to 17-year-olds how much television they watched a week, and the average was nine hours. In 2004, the same survey showed not much of an increase, with an average at 10

## Overweight teens are likely to remain overweight as adults, which puts them at risk for some very scary health complications.

hours. But, when the time spent playing video games and on the computer was added, the total time spent was around 20 hours. The causes of the obesity epidemic plaguing youth are clear, and as these teens grow older the consequences of their lifestyle become just as apparent.

"Overweight teens are likely to remain overweight as adults, which puts them at risk for some very scary health complications, such as Type 2 diabetes, orthopedic problems, cardiovascular diseases, and some types of cancer," says Dr. Ball.

Some health problems affect overweight youths as well. High blood pressure and high cholesterol are common among obese and overweight teens. Another repercussion is social, includ-

ing isolation and mockery from peers.

There are some important things a teen should know on how to approach getting in shape. Dr. Ball stressed the importance of knowing the difference between physical activity and exercise. Physical activity is anything that gets you moving. It includes walking, biking, playing Frisbee, or even playing tag with your friends. Exercise is a planned and structured workout, usually an organized sport, or having a specific goal at the gym.

Working out can be intimidating. Canada's Physical Activity Guide suggests that teenagers complete 90 minutes of physical activity per day. When preparing to workout, select an activity or sport you enjoy. If it isn't fun, you won't keep doing it. If you're feeling unsure or nervous, get some support from your family, friends, or an adult you look up to. Find people with gym experience who are willing to help you get started. When you're trying to start a healthy habit it can be a struggle, so make sure you have lots of positive reinforcement. Furthermore, your diet is a very important part of your health. The 2004 *Canadian Community Health Survey* reported that 59 per cent of Canadian youth reported eating fruits and vegetables less than five times a day. These teens were found to be significantly more likely to be overweight or obese. Try to avoid fatty or sugary foods, and use *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating* for inspiration on how to eat healthy foods and in appropriate portions.

So how does a teen commit to fitness and stay in shape? Dailyn Bell, who was a member of Team Alberta for ringette in the 2007 Canada Winter Games, and has many years of experience playing high-level ringette, works out

three times a week during the off-season. She focuses on improving her aerobic conditioning, coordination, and "core" (tummy and back muscles) strength. "I stick to three square meals a day and stay away from simple sugars, found mainly in sweets and pastries," says Bell.

She has a busy schedule, trying to balance family, work, school and friends. She fits it all in by combining social and workout times. This makes fitness more enjoyable. "I love the challenge and it leaves me feeling great," says Bell. "Exercise helps me forget distractions and deal with stress."


She's on to something. Exercise helps combat depression, which can negatively affect eating patterns. "Depression, anxiety, and stress can cause youth to overeat," agrees Dr. Ball, "or in some cases eat too little, in an attempt to gain control over their lives."

Canadian teens who are overweight or obese are faced with present and future health complications, social acceptance and self-esteem issues. Becoming healthy can be difficult, but if you have the determination to take care of yourself, moral support from the people around you, and maintain a balanced diet, you're on track for a healthy future. ■

### Paige's tips:

- Find an activity you like
- Start your day with a brisk walk
- Shoot hoops with friends
- Take part in a community league sport
- Dust off the old bike
- Start a recreational game at your school  
Try dodgeball, volleyball, basketball
- Get other kids involved





# Third World Kid

I thought moving would be the end, and it was; but it was also the beginning of a whole new way of seeing the world

By Bhuvana Sankaranarayanan

**T**ears were rolling down my face, but I didn't care. I was clutching my bear—the one that I had, in a burst of inspiration, named Snow White—with one hand, while holding tightly onto the doorknob with the other. It was a fight between my will and that of my parents; if I could just hold on to the doorknob for long enough then we wouldn't have to leave our home again, we wouldn't have to move to a strange new world. I lost this war of wills, and with it, the battle. We moved to Canada.

Moving from place to place can seem exciting. You get to meet new people, expose yourself to new cultures and so many more things. The problems are usually not taken into account until far later, when you realize how many people you'll leave behind, and how you may not fit into the place where you're going.

I was just a baby when I left India, my birthplace and native country, for Kuwait, an obscure little country in the Middle East, located right beside Iraq. This was just after the Gulf War, and I can imagine that my parents must have been a little insecure about living in Kuwait, since they always tried to instill Indian values in me. But once I was there I attended an Indian private

school, learned about Indian traditions, languages and festivals, and we still visited India every summer and winter.

Even then I was confused about my origins. Truth be told, I loved Kuwait far more than India. I had friends there; I even liked the weather better. My mother tried to tell me that this was wrong; born and brought up in India, she wanted me to appreciate and love it the way that she did, as a homeland. She didn't realize that I couldn't share her feelings for her country.

Don't get me wrong. We did move back to India for a year when I was about five and that move didn't really upset me. I had a grandmother who doted on everything I said or did, I could speak the native language well enough to make new friends, and liked my school. Still, I would be lying if I said that I didn't pine for Kuwait.

Once I was back in Kuwait, I was glad to see that nothing had changed; my friends were still there, the weather was as nice as ever, and we could still have picnics out in the desert. The flora and fauna felt familiar, and I knew my neighbourhood like the back of my hand. I was proud to live in such a prosperous country.

My parents' announcement that we were

moving to Canada had a profound impact upon my nine-year-old self. I remember vividly the days I spent crying and berating my parents. I hated them and I hated myself.

After we moved, I was homesick for what seemed like forever. Nightmares followed me wherever I went for two years. I could not communicate my sorrow effectively with my parents. In my unwillingness to confess to my parents that I woke up crying almost every day, an invisible barrier was built between us that would never be repaired, and I could never again be as open with my parents as I had been before. I had no friends; I spoke with an accent and wore loose, baggy, ugly pants, or frilly dresses everywhere.

This isolation from my peers and a lack of Canadian-style social skills at such a critical stage of my life led to me developing certain annoying habits, which stick with me even today, although I do try and suppress them. After leaving elementary school behind, I hoped that I might have left my nightmares and my sad social life behind. The nightmares didn't come back, but I still didn't make any real friends until Grade 9, at which point I met the best friends



# ...would that nine-year-old who cried so much at the prospect of moving to Canada have believed that she would ever regard this country as her home?"

...and here...

...and here

that I could ever have asked for, anywhere.

I started high school last year, which was painfully sad since I had to leave some of my junior high friends behind. But with a new school came the welcome change that I needed; in a school of more than 2,100 people I was free to make new and positive impressions upon people which, I am happy to say, I did.

Sometimes I still don't really feel like I fit in, but that's okay, right? Everyone has the right to be a little bit different and a little bit themselves. It's what we find so attractive about each other. I used to blame my parents for not letting me become more "Westernized," but when I look back on it today, they did only what they thought was best for me, and never stopped being kind, loving, and supportive parents. I always remember that they were the ones who shaped me into the person that I am today.

I also wonder: would that nine-year-old who cried so much at the prospect of moving to Canada have believed that she would ever regard this country as her home? That she would grow to love it? Perhaps that nine-year-old wouldn't have. But I am proud to say that my 15-year-old self positively adores Canada. ■

## Advice for the unwillingly relocated

So you're moving, huh? And your parents won't put it off despite the fact that it's going to ruin your entire life and high school career? Relax. You're not alone. Chances are you're in for the experience of a lifetime – but you'll probably still feel a sense of sadness and emptiness for the home and friends that you left behind. It's a natural feeling, but here are some things that you can do to drive all thoughts of sadness away:

### Keep busy

Many people who relocate find that they suddenly have nothing to do because they don't know their new neighbourhood. This, combined with a sullen attitude, can spiral you into depression. This is because you simultaneously have a large amount of time in which to think (pine) about all the things you miss about your old home, or what your new home is lacking, and you don't give yourself an opportunity to enjoy yourself. Get out of the house; go somewhere

new every day: the library, the mall or the park.

### Meet new people

Right now it seems like you're never going to forge friendships that are as good as the ones you left behind, and the truth is it will take a long time. But making new friends will allow you to better enjoy yourself in this new environment. Join a club or society that catches your interest. That way even if you have to switch schools, you will still know like-minded people.

### Keep a positive attitude

Sometimes it's hard to adapt to a new environment; but be patient and resilient, and sooner or later you will come to love your new home. Don't expect too much all at once; you will not have new best friends and share the same level of intimacy and trust as you did with your old friends immediately. But everything will fall into place in time.




# The Fire-Breathing Dragon

In my own words

By Claire Fontaine







# Dad's alcohol abuse has left me with an anxiety disorder and many painful memories. But I've learned to deal with it. Sober or not, he's still my father.

## **sit in the living room of the downtown**

apartment that I share with my mother, listening to the song “*Styrofoam Plates*” by the band Death Cab for Cutie. With lines such as “you’re a disgrace to the concept of family,” this song has always made me pause to reflect. The five-minute piece is about someone questioning the eulogies at his father’s funeral, doubting the honesty of those praising his “integrity” when, in reality, his father was anything but a man of principle.

Initially, I was surprised to hear someone saying such harsh things about their dead father, but then I began to consider what I would say at my own father’s funeral. Would I stand in a black dress, my head bowed, in front of crowds of people who did not know the complexity behind my father? What could I say about the alcoholic salesman with bipolar disorder who, throughout my childhood, was both a fire-breathing dragon and knight in shining armor? But perhaps I am getting ahead of myself. We should start at the beginning.

When I was little I was primarily concerned

with the battles between Sailor Moon and Queen Barrel – not the battle between a man and himself. Addiction was a foreign thing; I had no idea how it would affect me in my later years, not just in giving me a pre-disposition to substance abuse.

My mom and dad were not together but remained close (they are to this day), and I would often hear them argue about my father’s “drinking.” What exactly drinking was, I had no idea, but I knew it was a big problem. I remained oblivious until one day, when I was five; I remember I was in bed with my mother (due to financial circumstances we were forced into a tiny apartment in which we shared a room) and although the details are somewhat vague, I know my inebriated father entered the room. It was like nothing I had ever experienced; my father began shouting, swearing, making derogatory comments about my mother’s native blood and threatening to slit her throat. He never actually made a move against her, but I was confused, terrified, and wanted it to stop. It did not.

Sometimes he would call us at three in the morning, accusing my mom of using “evil magic” on him and insulting her in various other ways; yet seconds later he would pathetically plead for her to save him. All I could do was shiver and cry.

Despite these horrifying occurrences, life continued. I tended not to think of my father’s addiction, and the man he became while under the influence. I hardly thought about it, even when my father was sent to prison for a short period of time due to drunk driving. I still didn’t quite understand what was going on. There were times when I was a witness to his drunken state and there were times when he was absent for months.

However, do you recall when I said my dad was also my knight in shining armor? He truly was, and that’s probably why it was – and still is – so difficult to comprehend. Some days he had a fantastic sense of humor, quick wit and boyishness. He’d let me put curlers in his hair, helped me with homework and let me eat candy when my mother refused. On many occasions,





**I'm not going to say that my life has been horrific, nor am I going to say that my time on earth has been the easiest... All I have is the present; just like my father, I live one day at a time.**

he put real efforts into staying sober. He's been in and out of rehabs all over western Canada and could probably recite "*The Big Book*" (an Alcoholics Anonymous publication) off by heart if you asked him. I would build up such confidence in him and then be absolutely crushed when I discovered he'd relapsed again.

By Grade 4, I began to switch back and forth between his house and my mother's. I've heard about other children from separated homes who have a difficult time adjusting to dual homes, but the change came naturally enough to me. By the age of nine, I'd already lived in 13 different places, and now my disconnection from a central home base was about to increase. If I was lucky, when things got rough for my dad, I'd be over to my mother's for the week and not present for the binges. However, more often than not, I was home with him. I'd have to listen to him crying, saying he was about to die; I'd have to pick up the mess of chips and cigarette butts that he – who was a total neat freak when he was sober – had left scattered everywhere in a trail of drunkenness. These early memories made a deep impact on me, and I carried resentment from it well into my teenage years.

By the time I was 12, I began to develop extremely high levels of anxiety. I lay awake nights, for hours upon hours, paralyzed with fear that someone was going to kill me. This extreme paranoia left me drained in the morning, and I couldn't be alone for long periods of time, not even in my own house. The Internet is a powerful thing, so powerful that the words I researched on my screen convinced me that I had paranoid schizophrenia.

During that period, my father declared bankruptcy and moved into my mother's house. Things went well for a while, until my dad disappeared the night prior to my 14th birthday. It was the second of my birthdays that he missed because he was too drunk. Within a couple of weeks I was out of the house and staying with a friend of my mother's. I refused to see my father for months after that birthday.

At this point in time, I began to develop an interest in politics. I discovered a path that could take me to fantastic places if I made the effort, and so I began to take a renewed interest in my education. It was too late in the year to really improve my marks, but I went into Grade 9 with a more disciplined focus. I hadn't talked to my father in months, but I began to miss him terribly. I wondered if ignoring him was really the most mature way to handle the situation. True, my father's lack of control had hurt me in many ways, but he's still my father.

We began, slowly, to develop a relationship again. I eventually began to stay with him again (under the condition that he never drink in my presence. I didn't want any part of it). I came to the realization that his addiction was his own problem to deal with, and not mine. That doesn't mean I can't help and support him, but in the end it's his own life he's destroying.

Those months of isolation taught me that no matter what happened, my life would go on. As we became close again, I told him about the anxiety that was plaguing me. I had lived with the fear that I was crazy for two years before my parents took me to the hospital. I met with psychiatrists who asked me questions about

my health, childhood and current mental state. They deduced that my anxiety stemmed from the unstable lifestyle that I lived as a child, and if I worked at reducing my stress then the anxiety would subside.

Two years later I am an honours student, with plans to attend the University of Ottawa and become a political diplomat. I read and write a lot – both offer me solace in an otherwise hectic life. My mother is doing well, and my father is currently living in a halfway house. It sounds a lot grimmer than it actually is; he's currently sober and working towards realizing his own life's ambitions. How long he'll remain alcohol free is in his hands, not mine.

I'm not going to say that my life has been horrific, nor am I going to say that my time on earth has been the easiest. What I know is that the challenges I've had to deal with so far mean so much less to me than the plans I have in store. I will never forget those horrible nights as a five-year-old child, but those days are done.

All I have is the present; just like my father, I live one day at a time. ■

*\*Claire Fontaine is not her real name*

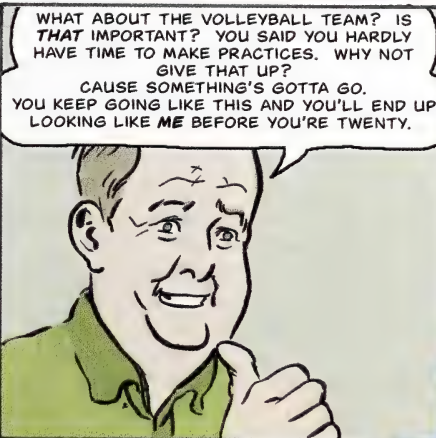
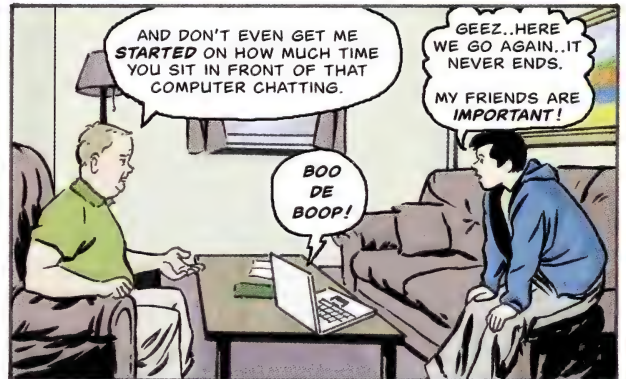
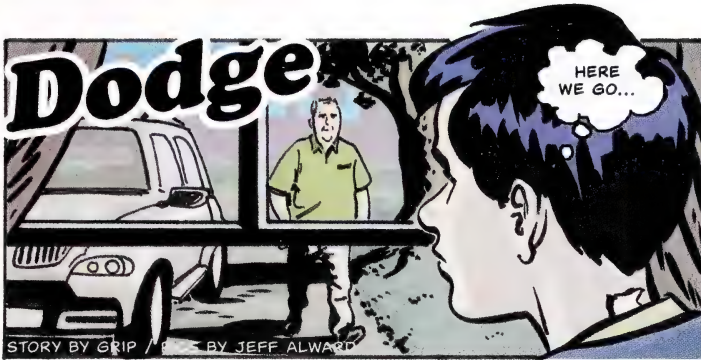
### Who you gonna call?

Do you, or someone you love, have an alcohol or drug problem? Call Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868 or go to [www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca) or the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission help line: 1-866-332-2322, or go to [www.aadac.com](http://www.aadac.com) and click on "youth."



# Dodge

STORY BY GRIP / BY JEFF ALWARD





# Portfolio

In each issue of **Grip**, we feature creative works from our readers – poetry, personal essays, short stories, illustrations, comic strips and photography. Winning submissions are awarded \$50 and are featured in the magazine and on the website at [www.griponlife.ca](http://www.griponlife.ca). Send in your submissions to [creative@griponlife.ca](mailto:creative@griponlife.ca)

## Karaoke Commentary BY TAYLOR SCOTT

Momentary lapses in the society knockouts  
Face down landslide, the scales are tipping  
Television train sets run circles in the dark  
No one's going to find you if they can't.

Intermission motorcade, get out of the way  
Let the breakdown simmer like a pocket watch  
Drop the phone lines, Listerine hideaways  
As every second word crawls its way to the top.

Distractions collapse into a better world.  
Somebody's out there, somebody's gonna  
turn it around.

Renegade turnstiles mark up the pavement  
Amid lonely voices listening for the highlights  
Casual acquaintances searching for dry spots  
Pushing past the tidal wave, energy wasted.

Assembly line tactics with memory discounts  
The followers beckon with stolen cheap seats  
Time's wasted, flooding down the sewage drain  
With abstract measures as the noise trails off.

Distractions collapse into a better world.  
Somebody's out there, somebody's gonna  
turn it around.

## Mushroom BY CHRIS FURLINGER



## Metamorphosis

BY ELYA CRAIG

Down the street  
and down the next  
I jog in near complete  
darkness.

I see a faint blue glow  
lining the vast expanse of sky  
overhead.

But dawn is  
approaching slowly,  
as if the sun is drowsy,  
still waking up from a  
night's rest.

Brittle leaves crunch  
under my steadily moving feet.  
my breath escapes  
in short wispy puffs.

Though it is a crisp morning,  
I can feel the darkness lifting,  
and with it goes the  
damp chill.

I jog on, soaking in  
the stillness of the early  
morning.

In a sudden flash of light,  
the first rays of sunlight  
cascade down in a  
blanket of warmth.

I look around.  
Leaves that have not yet  
fallen from the trees  
softly sway in a kaleidoscope  
of brilliance.  
I am awestruck  
by the beauty of  
the day.

Trotting on with  
my arms outstretched,  
my first impulse is to laugh.



**'Til I'm gone** BY CAITLIN HART

You don't see the lights 'til they're out.  
Your thirst is quenched 'til the water runs out.  
You don't notice me 'til I'm out.

You don't need anyone 'til they walk away.  
You don't feel the pain 'til the curse fades away.  
You don't notice me 'til I'm gone.

You don't fall asleep 'til the sun comes up.  
You don't have the answers 'til the time is up.  
You don't notice me 'til I'm gone.

**Reclaimed Innocence** BY JESSICA BILLINGSLEY

In the autumn of memory,  
the demons vanish  
and we are all smiles once more.  
I no longer slowly seep into oblivion  
and the voice that once  
resided within me is gone.  
I laugh, and you laugh;  
we are united once again.  
And finally we are free.  
No longer restrained  
by the sadness in me  
by that creature in me.  
No longer poisoned  
by the venom  
that once flowed from me  
and the anger in my words.

**Knife Dreams** BY STEPHEN DAHL

Every demented night,  
That same demented sight,  
Invades my mind once more.  
Why did he do that?  
Did he just pluck her name out of a hat?  
I wish that knife,  
Didn't pierce the woman's life,  
How could one be so selfish?  
She merely looked him in the eye,  
And that's how she died,  
Why did I have to see it?

If I met the man,  
Could I touch his hand?  
Would I possess the courage?  
I know I'd just scurry,  
I'd be in no hurry,  
To see her killer again.

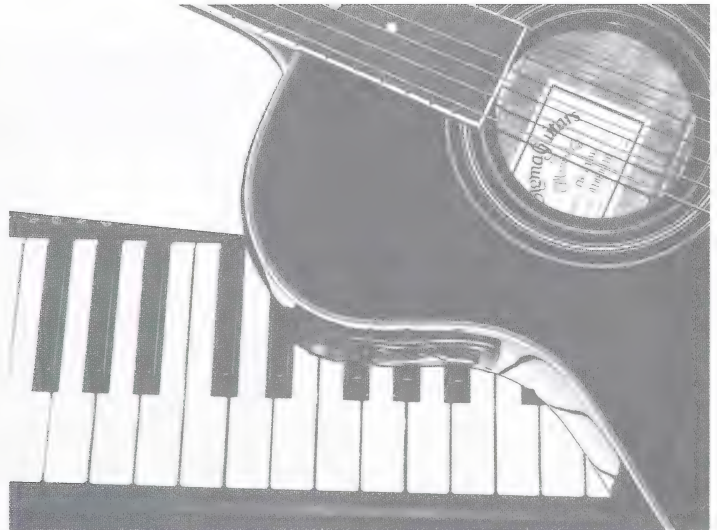
Being a former mom,  
The family couldn't move on,  
They completely broke down sobbing.  
The anguish they felt,  
Made my heart melt,  
But I couldn't do a thing.

As I sat there in tears,  
I thought of all those years,

**Downtown** BY LOUISE RAMBIERT



**Love** BY AMBER DAWSON



My mom was within reach for me.  
Picking me up when I'd fall,  
She was there through it all.  
She embraced me every day,  
Much more than words can say,  
But what if she was gone?  
After all we've shared,  
I'd be so scared,  
If I had no one there for me.

As a shiver scampered down my spine,  
The answer I found was divine,  
I really could do something.  
I shared the woman's last words,  
So it all could be heard,  
And now,  
I drift off to sleep soundly.



She was so pathetic; for she was back to the mirror again, gawking at it as if it held the answer to life's plaintive little questions that, in her opinion, were barely worth the time and trial of answering. It wasn't as if she would like the answer she'd get to any of her questions.

But that didn't matter. At the moment, the only thing worth considering was the mirror. Were her eyes deceiving her? She had only had one bowl of ice cream and an apple all week. Why did she look so abhorrent?

She looked for the shape that her body had once held; she looked for the gentle curve of her breasts, and the subtle shape of her buttocks. Where had it all gone? Maybe something was wrong with the mirror. But the mirror never lied; the truth always hurt.

She explored the shape of her body with dismal azure eyes. She not only felt dejected, but it was as if her body was expressing her emotions. She was shapeless now; her once slender figure had become haggard. The starvation she had imposed upon it was taking its toll. And she couldn't stop now. Not eating was the only way to keep away from the substances that had once caused her so much tribulation. She didn't know how to help herself once the food passed her lips and entered her system.

And she wouldn't allow herself to overeat ever again.

Never again.

So she had lost the body she had once held so dear. The price to be thin had to be worth it. It had to be.

The feeling of self-satisfaction whenever she lost a pound was turning out to be the only worthwhile feeling in her life. It was going to be so much easier now; she no longer had to focus on losing weight. All she had to do was keep from gaining weight.

The sweet taste of satisfaction was turning bitter in her mouth. Her body was wasting away, the silky tresses of hair that fell over her shoulders were hanging lifelessly. But that was okay. The blotches on her face and the lifeless eyes were better than being fat.

## Hippopotamus BY MIKAELA FISHER

Running away from a huge, crazed dog, I dove into a stinky old dumpster. The beast couldn't get in so it just sat there, waiting for me to crawl out, so that it could attack me and maybe rip off my head.

Not knowing what else to do, I sat in the dumpster and soon fell asleep. When I woke up



in the morning, the dog was still there and I was still stuck in the giant garbage can. Soon enough, I heard this loud noise coming towards me. It got louder and louder, so I decided I would peek outside to find out what the terrifying sound was. Thanks to my luck, it was a dump truck coming to unload a wonderful surprise. It poured oozy trash all over me. Banana peels, candy wrappers, used Kleenexes, and anything else that you don't want to know about, were dumped all over me!

Outside, the dog was still staring at the dumpster, just waiting for its prey, me, to come out. Later that afternoon a waste truck rumbled in; this one to take my dumpster away. It picked the whole metal box up with two enormous tongs, and dumped the contents, me included, into the back of the truck.

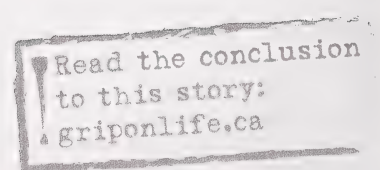
As the truck drove away, I saw that the dog had gotten bored with the dumpster because dinner – me – was no longer in it. The beast was meandering away.

None of this terrible story would have happened if my parents had let me get a strange pet; a pet that could protect me from crazed, man-eating dogs. That pet: a hippopotamus. I asked for one for Christmas, but they said no. This is all their fault, I thought, picking coffee grounds from my hair as the truck rumbled away, with me still inside.

## Stratosphere BY JOSEPH HOFFMAN

The *Stratosphere*. The name meant power itself. It was a brand new design for a fighter aircraft, with abilities beyond all its predecessors. With a perfectly aerodynamic fuselage and jet propulsion rockets, it surpassed even the F-35 *Lightning II* by reaching speeds surpassing mach 3. Also, a radar neutralizing system was embedded into the nosecone that made the *Stratosphere* virtually invisible to radar within a 300 mile radius. Armed with machine guns – fitted with 250 rounds each – that were tucked into the wings, and three medium-range Sidewinder missiles hidden in the fuselage, which was made of thick, yet very lightweight and durable alloy called Al-Li. The *Stratosphere*. The master of the skies. Its creator, Dan Foster knew it could be trusted to only the most reliable, most skilled hands in the world.

The graphics of the flight simulator were phenomenal, almost as good as the real thing. Every crack and crag in the virtual canyon looked genuine; the river that ran at the bottom seemed perfect. The only thing that appeared even the least bit fake was the sky.





It was a cold winters' day when I sat down to write my Christmas list. Names of those dear filled the pages accompanied with possible gift ideas. Perhaps a few gifts I would not have minded receiving for myself were pencilled jokingly in the margins, but that is not for me to say. And just when I had gone off on numerous tangents of ridiculous gift ideas for myself and others (a meat thermometer being one), that the most ridiculous idea of all hit me.

Cow.

And I mean it literally when I say the idea did hit me, in the form of a Christmas catalogue from World Vision my sister had thrown at me. Squelching my brief bout of annoyance, I began to flip through the pages of the catalogue. I had expected to find angel ornaments, nativity figurines or something equally festive. However, to my surprise, I found listings of farm animals. Bewildered, I read closer and I was surprised at the contents of a truly unique catalogue.

Millions of people around the world are living in poverty, fighting a constant uphill battle to survive. During the holiday season, the concepts of "peace, love, joy and goodwill to

all men" are extolled to a commercial degree, making appearances on holiday shopping bags, Christmas cards and television specials. People tend to feel more generous and full of cheer during this time of the year, and to make this point they embark on large shopping sprees, struggling against crowds of individuals as full of cheer as they. However, rarely do we stop and think about how we really could make a difference, how we really can bring "goodwill to all men" instead of settling for just bringing a nice fruitcake.

The World Vision Catalogue, like many other world relief catalogues I have now discovered, aims to do something we take for granted during the holiday season: give to others. It encourages individuals to give the gift of charity by buying a gift for a needy family under the name of a friend. It seems odd at first, to picture going up to my best friend and exclaiming, "For your Christmas gift, I bought a goat in your name and it is going to help an impoverished family become self-sufficient!" and then watch her look disbelievingly around for the fruitcake. But, it is an idea that comes to grow on me.

A 4GB iPod nano costs around the vicinity of \$230. With that kind of money, you could buy either eight hens and four roosters, two goats, a sheep, four pigs, supply four classrooms, clothe 170 children, stock two medical clinics, buy 30 fruit trees, start 24 gardens, provide clean water for a family, educate four children for life, help two families start a business or immunize two communities of children against killer diseases. With just \$200, you could impact lives for generations (and don't even get me started on what one can do with the money for a Sony PS3, which could, among other things purchase a dairy cow or furnish an entire classroom).

It's not wrong to receive or to want to receive nice gifts at Christmas. Many spend months plotting, strategizing and persuading loved ones in just the right way for a particular gift and I don't mean to rob them of the fruits of their labour.

But maybe next year, instead of receiving another garish sweater from a well-meaning aunt, suggest that she chip in and "buy" you the bunny or turkey on your Christmas list. And why not? I am thinking of putting "goat" on mine.

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**Edited** BY SUZANNE THERAULT

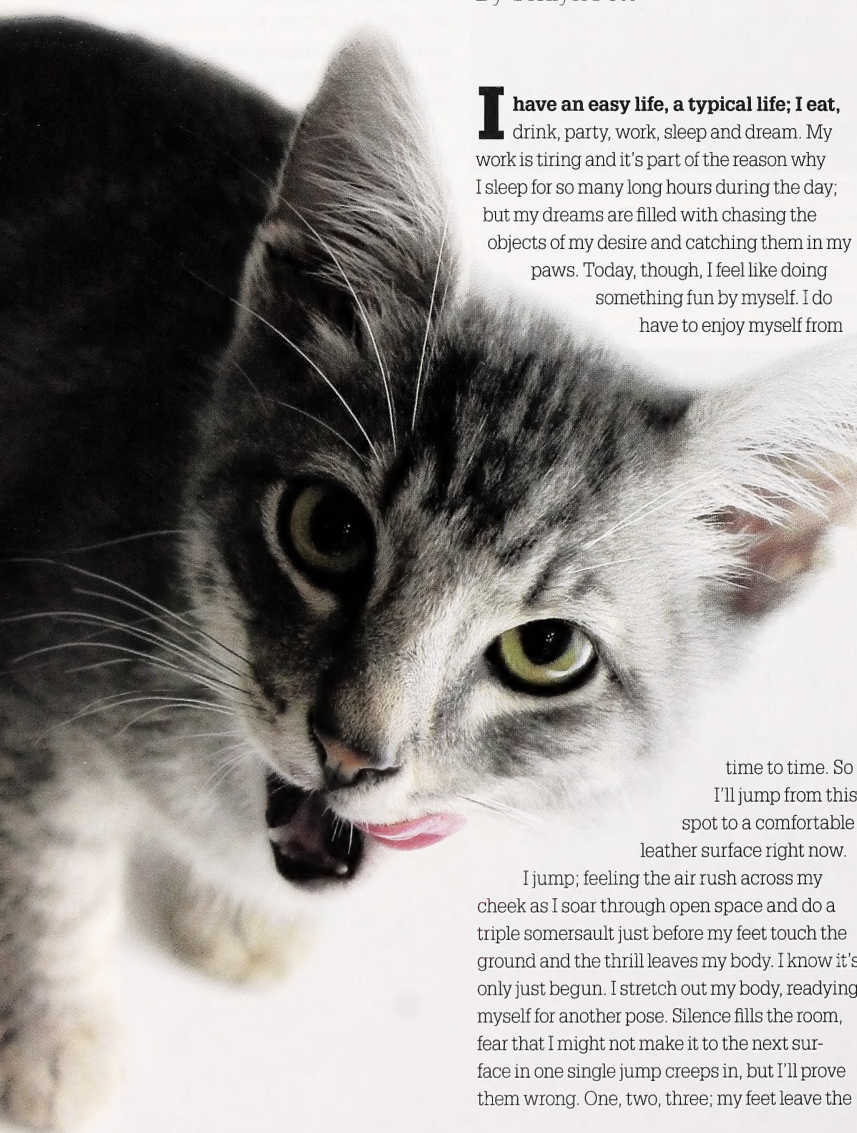




# This Feline Life

There's no reason to get catty about it, but there is a little bit of "meow" in each of us

By Terilyn Pott



**I** have an easy life, a typical life; I eat, drink, party, work, sleep and dream. My work is tiring and it's part of the reason why I sleep for so many long hours during the day; but my dreams are filled with chasing the objects of my desire and catching them in my paws. Today, though, I feel like doing something fun by myself. I do have to enjoy myself from

ground only to soar through nothingness, my body twists in the air to keep its momentum and trajectory before barely landing once more onto the next; shouts of praise fill the long-held silence; but they still don't sound as impressed as I would like them to be.

So I ready myself again; jump onto the glass frame. I prepare for the next one: I'll jump from here to the farthest object, doing many acrobatic tricks for extra praise. I start off with a somersault, two back flips, a front flip, and just as I'm about to do my last trick I realise I might not make it. My feet hit the surface and I sway, lose my balance, and fall forever, my body plummeting downward.

But at the last second I turn around and land on all fours, letting out a small sigh. A shiver runs along my body and I shake it out, thinking of how close a call that was; but it will not sway my determination. I failed that round, but now I have to do twice as well because my owner is watching me, waiting to pass me my reward.

I look around, and find a good spot. Halfway up I stop and jump into the air, doing one single flip before landing. It's enough to earn my reward, a small snack that I munch on cheerfully, thinking that it's about time to get back to tidying myself up.

Before I can do that, a light flashes from across the room, distracting me. What is that shiny, flashing box she's always aiming at me, anyways? I wish she'd put it away. Hopefully, I might have a few minutes to close my eyes before she puts me outside and I go to work, patrolling the grounds. Ah, how I love a balanced feline life. **Q**

time to time. So I'll jump from this spot to a comfortable leather surface right now.

I jump; feeling the air rush across my cheek as I soar through open space and do a triple somersault just before my feet touch the ground and the thrill leaves my body. I know it's only just begun. I stretch out my body, readying myself for another pose. Silence fills the room, fear that I might not make it to the next surface in one single jump creeps in, but I'll prove them wrong. One, two, three; my feet leave the



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